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THE RIME OF  
THE ANCIENT  
MARINER  
CHRISTABEL AND  
KUBLA-KHAN  
COLERIDGE

LONGMANS  
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EDITED BY

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PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND ENGLISH COMPOSITION IN COLUMBIA COLLEGE

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SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

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THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

CHRISTABEL, AND KUBLA KHAN



*Coleridge, Samuel Taylor*

Longmans' English Classics

COLERIDGE'S  
THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT  
MARINER  
CHRISTABEL AND KUBLA KHAN

EDITED

WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTIONS

BY

HERBERT BATES, A.B.

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## PREFACE

I HAVE treated these poems as introductory to poetry, aiming to help boys and girls to see the beauties of song-land. True, some seem elect, without aid ; others seem by nature debarred. There is, however, a great mean—the host of young people who may be taught to enjoy poetry. Editor and teacher must help them, not merely by admiring, but by explaining admiration. Poetry reaches us, not by miracle, but by means most definite. The printed lines convey certain sounds pleasing in themselves. Yet to the untrained ear even this beauty must be demonstrated. Just so with the ideas, to us so suggestive. The student must be helped to grasp the idea, to master the material for emotion. His imagination must do the rest.

I have tried to avoid both extremes—cold analysis and vague appreciation. Appreciation can hardly be intelligibly conveyed. Analysis, carried too far, becomes mechanical, deadening ; leading even to snobbish patronage of art so easily measured. It seems better, aiming at the mean, to explain the reason of our pleasure, and so lead others, first to see, then to feel, as we do.

Such guidance is the object of this book. Alone it cannot accomplish this. The teacher is needed, the teacher who, feeling what poetry is, shall yet be willing patiently to slacken his pace, to explain, to encourage—perhaps along dull paths—other feet to the pleasant eminences of poetry.

H. B.



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## INTRODUCTION

### I. THE AUTHOR

“I have known,” says Wordsworth, “many men who have done wonderful things, but the only wonderful man I ever saw was Coleridge.” Yet a recent critic speaks of this same man as a “poetical Skimpole,” who died “after four decades of inglorious dependence upon rich men’s bounties.” And, strange as it may seem, both are, in some measure, right.

As a boy, Coleridge was unboylike, moping alone over story-books, or cutting down—a knight of his own imagined romances—ranks of unoffending thistles with his mimic sword. In part, this was due to his dreamy, imaginative nature; in part, to his delicate health, which kept him from ruder sports. But it was only for the first nine years of his life (1772–1781) that he was to enjoy the quiet of his country home. The death of his father, the pedantic, lovable, unworldly rector of Ottery St. Mary’s, left him an orphan, and he was taken away from his peaceful Devon to the great charity-school, Christ’s Hospital, in the busy heart of London.

Here, according to Charles Lamb, the life of a boy without friends—and Coleridge had none near—was far from happy. There was little food, often bad food, and sometimes savage injustice in the guise of discipline. Yet the strict government may have been good for Coleridge’s wayward temperament; and literature, however unkindly the guides, was an open land. Once, it is true, disheart-

ened, he sought escape in apprenticeship to a shoemaker, but was forced back into the reluctant pursuit of learning. Yet, even under schoolmaster Bowyer's frown, his dream-life went on. One incident is amusing. He was walking the crowded Strand,—swimming, in mind and arms, an imaginary sea. His outstretched hand brushed a stranger's pocket. He was promptly grasped. "What, so young and so wicked!" "But I'm not a pickpocket, sir; I thought I was Leander swimming the Hellespont." And the stranger, admiring, obtained for him entrance to a circulating library. Years later, De Quincey speaks of the mature Coleridge's "difficulty in regaining his position among daylight realities." The man was no less a dreamer than the boy.

Dreamer or no, Coleridge rose to be Captain, or head boy. On leaving, he entered Jesus College, Cambridge. Here he remained two years. But he took no degree. Debts; failure to win a scholarship; radical views in religion, which displeased the authorities; and, De Quincey says, "a heavy disappointment in love," drove him friendless into the London streets. In discouragement, he joined a regiment of dragoons, under the name of "Comberback," appropriate to his horsemanship. But a pencilled lament in Latin betrayed him; and his friends extricated him and sent him back to Cambridge.

A few months, however, found him once more adrift, this time with a new friend, Robert Southey, a poet of smaller genius but of bulkier accomplishment, another young dreamer of freedom, strayed from the University fold. These two, with a few kindred spirits, planned the Pantisocracy, an ideal community, a little like the later "Brook Farm," to be founded in some terrestrial paradise beside the Susquehanna, where there would be but two hours of work each day, and poetry, philosophy, and

golden dreams illimitable. But golden dreams require, alas, a golden foundation. The poet-emigrants got no farther than Bristol, Southey's home. There their plans stopped, temporarily from lack of funds, ultimately from the intrusion of other interests. The two poets fell in love with two sisters. Southey married Edith Fricker, Coleridge married Sara, and the prospects of the Pantisocracy languished.

Coleridge was never practical. Of all the steps of his life, however, including the enlisting, his marriage was the maddest. His total income, except for a conditional offer of a few pounds from a publisher, was approximately nothing. But he had "no solicitude on the subject." He hoped, indeed, to raise enough produce on his little patch of ground to support himself and his "pensive Sara." Of course his unsubstantial plans failed to produce substantial results. He tried one device after another—lectured, established a newspaper, published his "Juvenile Poems," wrote for the *Morning Chronicle*, took private pupils, and preached in local Unitarian churches—yet, had it not been for the kindly help of Southey and of the publisher Cottle, he could hardly have contrived to pay the expenses of life.

Remember, however, that this inadequacy was not entirely his fault. His health was poor—it had been from the first. His best work had to be done spontaneously; the knowledge that he must do well seemed to embarrass him. Besides, his home life was unhappy. His wife did not understand him, nor could he sympathize with her. Severe attacks of facial neuralgia, too, were driving him to the use of laudanum, the drug that was, for the rest of his life, in the words of Foster, "to shatter the most extraordinary faculties I have ever yet seen resident in a form of flesh and blood."

Yet, little as he had accomplished, it is at this time

that Hazlitt writes of him, "You wished him to talk forever. His genius had angelic wings." All who met him felt that this young man was remarkable.

Yet what, in 1796—just one year before the writing of the "Ancient Mariner"—had this remarkable young man actually accomplished? His early poems are of no great merit. Mr. Swinburne doubts whether the "Religious Musings" or the "Lines to a Young Ass" "be the more damnable," but notes "Time, Real and Imaginary" as the "sweetest among the verses of boys who were to grow up great." The promise, such as it is, is indefinite; the bud hints little of the fruit. The verse is conventional, of but formal excellence. The poet had not yet awakened to his real self. Nor was Southey the man to awake him. The man who could rouse him, who did rouse him, was yet to come into his life.

This new influence was William Wordsworth, then poet merely in prospect, his verses penned but unprinted, pondering his theories, and preaching his doctrines to a little admiring circle. It was in 1797 that Coleridge met him. Their removal to Nether-Stowey brought the two poets together and led to one of the most famous and most fruitful of poetic intimacies, a friendship that affected the whole history of English literature.

Let us see Coleridge with the eyes of Dorothy Wordsworth. "At first," she writes, "I thought him very plain, that is for about three minutes. He is pale, has a wide mouth, thick lips, and not very good teeth, longish, loose-growing, half-curling, rough black hair. But if you hear him speak for five minutes, you think no more of these." Hazlitt, another of the group, says, "His forehead is broad and high, light, as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows; and his eyes rolled beneath them like a sea with darkened lustre. He removed all doubts by beginning to talk. He did not cease while



he stayed, nor has he since, that I know of." De Quincey says of his eyes, "And it was from the peculiar appearance of haziness or dreaminess, which mixed with their light, that I recognized my object."

He immediately captivated Wordsworth; in fact the captivation was mutual. And mutual admiration is not a bad thing for genius of a disheartened turn. The two became at once inseparable, each bringing out the other's best, pacing the windy downs, with no companion but the admiring Dorothy. True, their choice of walks differed. Coleridge liked "uneven ground," loved to "break through straggling branches of copsewood;" Wordsworth preferred "a straight gravel walk," with no "collateral interruptions,"—tastes, by the way, oddly suggestive of the differences of their poetry. The country was ideal, "with woods, smooth down, valleys with brooks running down through green meadows to the sea." "Whether," says Professor Shairp, "it was the freedom from the material ills of life, or the secluded beauty of the Quantock, or the converse with Wordsworth, or all combined, there cannot be any doubt that this was, as it has been called, his *annus mirabilis*, his poetic prime. It was the year of 'Genevieve,' 'The Dark Ladie,' 'Kubla Khan,' the 'Ode to France,' the 'Lines to Wordsworth,' the 'Ancient Mariner,' and the 'First Part of Christabel,' not to mention many other poems of less mark. It was to Wordsworth the hopeful dawning of a new day which completely fulfilled itself; to Coleridge, the brief blink of a poetic morning which had no noon."

"Here," says Mrs. Oliphant, "the two poets came to the edge of their first joint publication, a book which, amid all its manifold imperfections, its presumptions and assumptions, was yet to give the world assurance of two sights of the greatest magnitude in its firmament." This

publication was the "Lyrical Ballads." At the time, little but the imperfections received notice, though—in comparison with Wordsworth, the prime offender—Coleridge escaped with light criticism. Coleridge had contributed little,—the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and a few other poems. The rest of the volume illustrated Wordsworth's theories of poetry, which, stated briefly, were that the simple emotions of daily life and the simple details of daily life are not out of place in poetry. These simple emotions, Wordsworth further held, should be expressed in the simple language of daily life, in the language of peasants, not in any artificial "poetic diction." There is obviously much truth in this. Wordsworth, however, stated his case in the most aggressive way. In a few poems, too, he carried his practice too far, writing of "idiot boys" and "household tubs," giving, undeniably, good opportunity for ridicule. And the critics, taking advantage of this, ignored all the real beauty of the poems. Coleridge, it seems, understood Wordsworth's theory even better than did Wordsworth himself, and did much, afterwards, to explain what his friend really aimed at. But, be the theory as it might, the new manner was to prevail, and the publication of the "Ballads" marked, in the history of English poetry, a revolution heralded by Burns, Cowper, and Blake, but now first understandingly set afoot by these young champions of simplicity.

The "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," save in its irregular metre, its moral of love for the humblest of creatures, and its very simple diction, bears little trace of this new manner of poetry. It seems, indeed, to have been regarded as rather a flat failure, or, as Southey termed it, "a very Dutch attempt at the sublime." Even Wordsworth failed to find in it any great merit. It is interesting to read his note in a subsequent edition. He says

that the reader owes to him the republication of the poem :—

“The Author was himself very desirous that it should be suppressed. This has arisen from a consciousness of the defects of the Poem, and from a knowledge that many Persons had been much displeas'd with it. The Poem of my Friend has, indeed, many great defects ; first, that the principal person has no distinct character, either in his profession of Mariner, or as a human being who having been long under the control of supernatural impressions, might be supposed himself to partake of something supernatural ; secondly, that he does not act, but is constantly acted upon ; thirdly, that the events having no necessary connection, do not produce each other ; and lastly, that the imagery is somewhat too laboriously accumulated. Yet the Poem contains many delicate touches of passion, and indeed, the passion is everywhere true to Nature ; a great many of the stanzas present beautiful images, and are expressed with unusual felicity of language ; and the versification, tho' the metre is in itself unfit for long poems, is harmonious and artfully varied, exhibiting the utmost power of that metre, and every variety of which it is capable. It therefore appeared to me that these several merits (the first of which, namely, that of the passion, is of the highest kind) gave to the Poem a value which is not often possessed by better Poems. On this account, I requested of my Friend to permit me to republish it.”

It was not, in fact, for years, that the “Ancient Mariner” took its present deserved position as one of the immortal poems of the language. Coleridge had written ahead of his time. He had to wait for appreciation.

His life, after this, we may pass over rapidly. In many ways the story is cheerless. It was the philosopher who lived on. The poet, the best of him, seems to have passed away with the passing of that year at Quantock.

For a year or so Coleridge travelled in Germany with the Wordsworths, studying a little, and translating Schiller's “Death of Wallenstein.” In 1799 he retired with Wordsworth into the Lake region of northern England—a region that gave to this group, Southey, Coleridge, and

Wordsworth, the name of the "Lake School." There Wordsworth remained. Not so Coleridge. Separated entirely from his family, who were supported by the less gifted but more dutiful Southey, he roamed at large. He made short flights to London, once even to Malta, returning always to the old shelter, to the old companions, who, however, shattered as he was in health and will, could no longer stimulate him to poetic effort.

In 1814, determined to overcome the opium-habit, he placed himself under the care of Mr. Gilman of Highgate, near London. With this help, to some degree, he succeeded, but it was too late to recall the best of his powers. He still wrote brilliant fragments of verse, but his work as poet was virtually closed. His new work, different as it was, was no less wonderful. "A Doctor Johnson of the nineteenth century," he still talked marvellously to groups of admiring friends, to young poets, young critics, young philosophers, who came from far and near to hear him, most with reverence; a few, like Carlyle, in the gruff contempt of youth. It was in these later years that he accomplished the bulk of his prose work—work that established his reputation as philosopher and as critic. And so he lived, till, at last, after fifteen years, the end came, the visit of "gentle Sleep, with wings of healing."

Coleridge had, he owned, a "smack of Hamlet" in him. He realized, it was his burden to realize, his own inadequacy. It was, in part, this that drove him into philosophic speculation.

"There was a time when, though my path was rough,  
 This joy within me dallied with distress,  
 And all misfortunes were but as the stuff  
 Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness.  
 For hope grew round me like the twining vine,  
 And fruit and foliage not my own seemed mine.

But now afflictions bow me to the earth,  
 Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,  
     But oh ! each visitation  
 Suspends what Nature gave me at my birth,  
     My shaping power of imagination.  
 For not to think of what I needs must feel,  
     But to be still and patient, all I can ;  
 And haply by abstruse research to seal  
     From my own nature all the natural man ;—  
     This was my sole resource, my only plan :  
 Till that which suits a part infects the whole,  
 And now is almost grown the habit of my soul."

He lacked self-help,—needed, as Mrs. Oliphant said, "to weave himself in with some more steady, more deep-rooted being." As to his philosophy, critics disagree. Some say that its golden haze hinted more than it really hid. Almost certainly the philosophy ultimately spoiled the poet. And yet his fame as philosopher dwindles year by year. It is as poet that he will live. "The highest lyric work," says Mr. Swinburne, "is either passionate or imaginative ; of passionate, Coleridge has nothing ; but for height and perfection of imaginative quality, he is the greatest of lyric poets. This was his special power, and this is his special praise."

## II. THE ORIGIN OF THE POEM.

Of this Wordsworth gives the following account :

"In the autumn of 1797, he (Coleridge), my sister, and myself, started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon, with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it ; and as our united funds were small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem to be sent to the *New Monthly Magazine*. Accordingly we set off, and proceeded along the Quantock hills, towards Watchet, and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the 'Ancient Mariner,' founded on a dream,\* as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend

\* A dream of "a skeleton ship with figures in it."

Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention ; but certain parts I suggested ; for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the 'Old Navigator,' as Coleridge afterward delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of the crime and of his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's 'Voyages' a day or two before that while doubling Cape Horn, they frequently saw Albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl. some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. 'Suppose,' said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time, at least not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together, on that to me memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular,

'And listened like a three years' child:  
The Mariner had his will.'

These trifling contributions, all but one, which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded, slipped out of his mind, as well they might. As we endeavored to proceed conjointly (I speak of the same evening) our respective manners proved so widely different that it would have been quite presumptuous for me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. . . . We returned by Duburton to Alfoxden. The 'Ancient Mariner,' grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds; and we began to think of a volume, which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on supernatural subjects, taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through an imaginative medium.—"Memoirs of William Wordsworth," by Christopher Wordsworth.

The passage from Shelvocke is as follows :

"They saw no fish, nor one sea-bird, except a disconsolate black Albitross, who accompanied us for several days, hovering about us as

if he had lost himself, till Hatley (my second captain), observing in one of his melancholy fits that this bird was always hovering near us, imagined from his color that it might be some ill-omen. That which, I supposed, induced him the more to encourage his superstition was the continued series of contrary tempestuous winds, which had oppressed us ever since we had got into this sea. But, be that as it would, he after some fruitless attempts at length shot the albitross, not doubting (perhaps) that we should have a fair wind after it."—Shelvoeke, "Voyage round the World," 1726.

Coleridge says, with regard to the origin of the poem :

"The incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural, and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. . . . In this idea originated the plan of the 'Lyrical Ballads,' in which it was agreed that my endeavors should be directed to persons and characters supernatural or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to secure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith."—"Biographia Literaria."

These accounts are valuable as showing from how many sources the creative mind may absorb its material. But the poem, composed of all these stray elements, is no more a collection of them than a fire is a mere collection of the various twigs, straw, and papers that feed it. Every one of us, in every day, stores up a little saving of sights, sounds, and thoughts. A creative mind will, at some later day, transform all these into some new whole, sprung from, but unlike, any of its various sources. Imagination is but a transubstantiation of fact, a transmuting of the commonplace. And genius is but a rare endowment of this transmuting imagination.

## III. THE FORM OF THE POEM.

The "Ancient Mariner" is a poem in substance and in form. Let us first examine this form. Read aloud the first stanza. It does not, you see, sound like ordinary prose. What is the difference? It is not in the rhyme, for, if you change "one of three" to "one of five," the sound will still be unlike that of prose.

Read the stanza a second time, this time after a "sing-song" fashion. You will find that you pronounce some syllables heavily,—with emphasis, or stress; while others you pass over lightly. Your reading will be much like this:

It *is* an *án*cient *má*rinér,  
 And he *stó*ppeth *ó*ne of *thrée*,  
 By thy *lóng* gray *bé*ard and *glít*tering *eý*e,  
 Now *whére*fore *stó*ppst thou *mé*?"

See now, if, in these light and heavy syllables, you cannot find some system. Write out a "scheme" of the stanza, marking the heavy, emphasized sounds  $\underline{\quad}$ , and the light sounds, which you pass over quickly,  $\cup$ . You will find the result as follows:

$\cup \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad} \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad} \cup \cup^*$   
 $\cup \cup \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad}$   
 $\cup \cup \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad} \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad} \underline{\quad}$   
 $\cup \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad} \cup \underline{\quad}$

No two heavy syllables come together, and there are never, between two heavy syllables, more than two light syllables,—usually there is only one. You might say, then, that the syllables usually come by turns, first one light, then one heavy, etc., or, better still, that the line consists, for the most part, of *groups* of two syllables, and

\* The emphasis on the last syllable of *mariner* is slight, merely a secondary accent.



that in each group the first is light, the second heavy. If there are three syllables, the first two are light. These groups are called *feet*.

Examine, now, any line in the poem. You will find the same thing true. We may, then, make a rule. The poem, we may say, consists of groups of syllables, each group consisting of two syllables, or sometimes of three. In each group, one syllable receives extra emphasis, a little more than any other syllable in the same group.

This is the rule, not only for this poem, but for all English poetry. If, then, you arrange words so that the emphatic syllables, when read naturally, will come at these intervals, you will be making verse. You will, at least, if you comply with one more condition.

The poem, we have seen, consists of groups of syllables, and these groups we called *feet*. There is another division. The poem is printed in *lines*. Each line contains a certain number of feet. Furthermore, the whole poem consists of groups of lines, or *stanzas*. How are these made up? In each stanza of four lines, you will find that the first and third lines contain four groups; the second and fourth, three groups. That is, there is a larger grouping than feet. As feet are groups of syllables, so lines are groups of feet, and stanzas are groups of lines. And all these must follow some regular rule, or, at least, some principle of symmetry.

If you can, now, arrange words so that they will naturally be read in this way, you will be writing verse. Try writing a stanza that shall sound like the first stanza of the "Ancient Mariner." By imitating the effect, you will the better appreciate the art.

In this poem, every group—with a variation that will be spoken of later—begins with a light syllable, and ends with an emphasized syllable. Such a foot, if of two syllables, is called iambic; if of three, anapestic. In the

first stanza the first four groups are iambic ; the fifth, anapestic ; the sixth and seventh, iambic ; the eighth, anapestic ; the ninth and tenth, iambic ; the eleventh, anapestic. Examine other stanzas in the same way.

If you have studied music at all, you will see that verse is much like music. In music, the groups are called measures ; in verse, they are called feet. In music, the accent is always at the beginning of the measure. So it is in some kinds of verse ; in this kind, however, it is always at the end. A measure in music may have many notes. A measure in verse very seldom indeed has over three. In music, you find length, pitch, and even accent indicated. In verse, your only guide is the natural pronunciation of the words, which shows you where to put the emphasis. But there is one marked resemblance. In music, in two measures of the same length, one measure will have two notes, say a half note and a quarter note ; another will have three notes, say three quarter notes. And these two measures are equivalent in time. ( Just so, in verse, an anapest, of three syllables, takes no more time than an iambic foot, of two. The syllables are pronounced more quickly, made shorter—that is all. And this usually gives the line an effect of speed and lightness.

Observe, for instance, stanza lviii. There one line is made up entirely of anapests,—“ And the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky.” This is not “irregular.” Coleridge chose this form deliberately. If he had wished, he could have written “ And sky and sea, and sea and sky.” But he preferred the swifter effect, and so used anapests.

Let us now, having established our rule, look at the exceptions. Take, first, those in the form of the feet. The second line of stanza vi. runs, “ Merrily did we drop.” Surely we cannot say “ Merrily.” The right

reading is the natural reading, "Mérrily did we drop," or, putting it in symbols,  $\acute{\text{z}}\text{ } \cup \cup \acute{\text{z}} \cup \acute{\text{z}}$ . What has happened? The first foot has simply been inverted. The heavy syllable comes, not at the end, but at the beginning. Instead of being iambic, the first foot has become, in terms of verse, trochaic. The line has the usual number of groups and of syllables in the groups, but the arrangement is varied; the accent has been drawn ahead, as in syncopation in music. This gives a pleasant variety to the sound. Other lines of the same kind are "Hither to work us weal," "Red as a rose is she," "Nodding their heads before her goes." Try to find others.

The poem, we have seen, is divided into lines, and these lines are combined in groups, called stanzas. These groups consist, usually, of four lines. In each, the first and third lines are of four feet, the second and fourth of three. That is, each stanza can be divided into two parts, into halves, each of these having one line of four feet and one of three. And the last syllable of the first half rhymes with the last syllable of the second. In the first stanza, for example, "three" at the end of line two rhymes with "me" at the end of line four. All this results in a certain balance between the two parts, a certain symmetry. Those who have studied music will see it is a little like the phrasing that one finds there. Read the first few stanzas aloud and note the symmetry of sound. Look at the printed page and see how it is represented in the form. The two parts of the stanza match, both to ear and to eye.

This stanza is imitated from old ballads. Compare, for instance, the following:

" It fell about the Martinmas  
 Whan nights are lang and mirk,  
 That the carline wife's three sons came hame,  
 And their hats were o' the birk.

“ It neither grew in syke nor ditch,  
 Nor yet in ony sheugh,  
 But at the gates o’ Paradise  
 That birk grew fair enough.”

“ The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,  
 The channerin’ worm doth chide.  
 Gin we be mist out o’ our place,  
 A sair pain we n aun bide.”

You will find this stanza, too, in many hymns,—in, for example, “ There is a green hill far away.” It is of all stanzas, probably, the most common.

What variations does Coleridge introduce into the form of this stanza? We see at first sight that there are some, for the stanzas are many of them of more than four lines. Where are the extra lines inserted? What is the effect of their presence on the rhyme-system? Let us take up the variations one by one.

The first consist in adding, after the third line, an extra line, rhyming with the line that it follows, suspending, so to speak, (the flow of the stanza.) Such in stanza lxxix. is the line, “ Which to their corsers came again.” If this line be omitted, the stanza will be like any four-line stanza. Of the same kind are stanzas xxxix., xlv., xlv., lxii., lxiii., lxiv., lxxii., lxxiv., lxxxii., lxxxix., cxxii., cxxxviii. In stanza xii., the extra line follows the first line, instead of following the third.

Another variation is in adding two lines, following out the regular structure. Line five, like lines one and three, is unrhymed. Line six rhymes with lines two and four. Of this type are stanzas \* xxiii., \* xxiv., \* xli., lx., \* lxxv., lxxxiv., lxxxvi., \* lxxxvii., cii., cxvii., cxxi., cxxvi., cxxix., cxxxv. Stanzas marked \* repeat, in line six, the rhyme-word of line four.

Stanza xlviii. contains all these variations. It ap-

proaches very closely, and may have suggested, the stanza that Scott uses in "Marmion."

Observe, in addition to what is noted above, *alliteration*, the repeating of the same sound—not necessarily of the same letter—at the beginning of words that stand near together, as in, "The breeze to blow," the "western wave," etc. Watch for instances of this. Observe its effect.

You will find, too, what is known as "medial rhyme," where the middle of the line rhymes with the end of the same line, as in "The guests are *met*, the feast is *set*," or, "And he shone *bright*, and on the *right*." Usually this occurs in the third line of the four-line stanza, or in the corresponding line of the longer stanzas.

Remember that all this deals only with the form. Verse may be perfect in form, and yet have not a spark of poetry. We have found what makes verse. Let us see what more is needed to make a poem.

#### IV. WHAT IS POETRY ?

The "Ancient Mariner" is a poem. What do we mean by that ? Simply that it is written in the form known as verse ? By no means. There must be something more. Not only must poetry have verse ; verse should, to make a poem, have added to it—poetry. And what is this poetry ? Certainly it is not poetry to say,—

" I put my hat upon my head,  
And went into the Strand,  
And there I met another man,  
Whose hat was in his hand."

This has the form of poetry ; but what is wanting ? Are the words too simple ? Look at another stanza, this time from the "Ancient Mariner" :

“ We drifted o’er the harbour-bar,  
And I with sobs did pray—  
‘ O let me be awake, my God !  
Or let me sleep away.’ ”

Here the words are no less simple, and the sound is very much the same. What is the difference? What is in one that is not in the other? Nothing in the first would move anybody’s feelings. Few, in reading the second, can fail to feel emotion. The first states facts that neither we nor the writer care anything about. The second expresses an emotion that appeals at once to all. Here is one difference—intensity of feeling.

But all intensity of feeling would not make poetry. Suppose you miss a train, are insulted by a street-car conductor, are exultant over a shrewd bargain in business. Would feeling of this sort fit poetry? Apparently, then, we must limit the kind of feeling. It must have dignity, a certain elevation, a certain beauty, and must be seen, not too crudely, but through softening, enhancing mists of imagination. Emotion, then, dignified, beautiful, idealized,—not immediate, but recollected in tranquillity—is one thing needed. And this is about as far as we can go. Poetry, some say, is heightened expression. It demands heightened thoughts, intensified feeling. To write a poem, one must attempt to utter the unutterable; the greater the poem, the more approximate the success. But it can never, of itself, quite accomplish its aim. It can but take the reader near to the poet’s original inspiring vision—within sight, perhaps within touch. It is for the reader to complete the work; take, with his own imagination, the last step; bridge the abyss and stand where the poet stands, where he invites.

And this imagination, this ability to respond to the summons of poetry, you must find by patience, by constant fellowship with the best of the world’s poets, by

open sympathy, by steady striving to cultivate, in yourself, the poet-sense of the wonder, the unexplored infinitude, of the things about us and over us.

How shall you best appreciate this particular poem? That is the next point to consider.

## V. METHOD OF STUDY.

At the outset, let us see what not to do. Do not study the poem as a piece of English to be "parsed." Do not, if you are a teacher, make your pupils rewrite it into prose. It is not meant to be written in prose. Poetical ideas are meant for poetry; in prose they are out of place—as awkward as the poor Albatross must have been if he tried to walk the ship's deck. Do not make of the poem a combined edition of grammar, spelling-book, dictionary, rhetoric, and encyclopedia. It is a poem, and as a poem it should be studied.

Avoid merely mechanical methods of study. Point out, for examples, words that are suggestive, picturesque, poetic,—words that suggest a whole clause of description. Do not, however, think that the poetry lies in these particular words. They are suggestive *here*. In another place they would be, very likely, as prosaic as any others. Too elaborate analysis of the essence of poetry will fail of its end. You will merely kill the goose, and get not a golden egg for your pains. Macaulay was right in saying, "The man who is best able to take a machine to pieces will be the man most competent to form another machine of similar power. In the branches of physical and moral science which admit of perfect analysis, he who can resolve will be able to combine. But the analysis which criticism can make of poetry is necessarily imperfect. One element must forever elude its researches, and that is the very element by which poetry is poetry."

How, then, shall we approach the poem? What plan will lead, most helpfully, to sympathetic appreciation?

First, gather from the pages that have gone before, the individuality of the man who wrote the poem. Next, get, incidentally, an idea of why he told the story. After that read the whole poem through, rapidly, at one sitting. Then you will be ready to study it.

“Study” has, perhaps, an unfortunate suggestion. It recalls struggles with Latin and Greek poems. Say, then, rather, that you are to endeavor to extract from the poem, not merely what you catch up in casual and careless reading, but what you can garner by diligent, appreciative search, stanza by stanza, line by line. In writing it, the poet pondered every detail. In reading it, ponder, in your turn, each slightest sign, that it may render up to you the significance that he entrusted to it.

You may hurry through a gallery of paintings, getting but a blurred glimpse of the whole array. Or you may work your way through, step by step, studying each canvas till you are sure you can make it mean to you what it meant to the man that made it. In this poem, each stanza is a picture. Slow study, sympathetic repetition, will bring out beauties that the hasty reader gets no hint of. What is more, whenever, afterward, you read the poem rapidly—just as when you pass through the gallery rapidly—you will get, in your passing glance, not merely the blurred glimpse, but you will recall, on the hint of that, all the beauty that you may have found in your hour of study. The riches, once extracted, will never relapse.

How is such study to be directed? Not, as I have said, to derivations and such philological facts. These are useful, but this is not the place for them. Here they are useful only so far as they enable you to grasp the poet’s precise meaning. It is to help you in this that the notes



are inserted, not to administer information important in itself.

Gain from study of a poem is twofold : appreciation of what the poet says, and appreciation of the art by which he says it. Add the poet's vision to your vision. Add too, to your own power of expression, a little, if only the tiniest fragment, of the power that you find in him.

How are you to appreciate what the poet says ? Resolve to see every scene distinctly. Picture, for example, the "three" on the way to the feast, and the gaunt figure of the Ancient Mariner, picking out, with his glittering eye, the "one" who must hear his tale. See, if you can, some good illustrations. Doré's, while over-wrought, may prove suggestive. But, if your imagination be vivid, it will show you better pictures than you can find printed or engraved. In this process the teacher should help, by questioning his pupils with regard to each scene, and by having them compare the mental pictures that they see. This will suggest to each much that would have otherwise passed unnoticed.

Build up each scene from its detail. See, for example, that the "ship" be not modern. It must harmonize with the Ancient Mariner. Recall, if you saw them at the World's Fair, the models of the Columbus caravels. If you live by the sea, or have ever seen it, recall, from your own experience, scenes of calm, of storm, of moonrise, of sunset. If you have never seen the sea, recall pictures of the sky, of northern lights, star-dogged moons, bloody suns. How many of all the pictures in the poem can you duplicate in your own experience ? Remember that, after this, when you see these things again—a sea-bird following a ship, a harbor "strewn with level light"—you will appreciate them the more for having seen them here, under guidance of this sovereign lover of nature's magic, approaching them through the golden gate of poetry.

Try to appreciate, too, the poet's art. Ask constantly what artistic impulse prompted him to select this word, this incident, this metrical form. Why could it not, just as well, have been otherwise? Think of all the possible means of expression, all the possible turns of the story, and try to decide why, of all these, he settled on those before us. Examine every detail of the work. Try to find what purpose—perhaps, what unconscious purpose—inspired it. But do not, in this, lose sight of the more important thing—the emotion that pervades the whole.

For method, take a few stanzas at each lesson, dwelling on each till, if possible, you have absorbed it into your memory,—not only in its words but in its spirit—till its poetry has become part of you, without the aid of printed letters. Try to enjoy without scorning study, and to study without missing enjoyment. Poetry, without pleasure, is profitless.

## VI. THE PURPOSE OF THE POEM.

Some will tell you to “interpret” the poem. You would do better not to make the attempt. Shakespeare and Browning may need “interpreting”—certainly they get it. But beware lest you extract from poems ideas which the authors never put in,—which have, in **fact**, originated in your own “inner consciousness.” As to the “Ancient Mariner,” we have Coleridge's own assurance that it is innocent of deeper meaning than appears on the face :

“Mrs. Barbauld once told me that she admired the ‘Ancient Mariner’ very much, but that there were two faults in it,—it was improbable and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that that might admit some question ; but as to the want of a moral, I told her that, in my judgment, the poem had too much, and that the only or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral senti-

ment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. It ought to have no more moral than the Arabian Nights' tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well, and throwing the shells aside, and lo ! a geni starts up, and says he must kill the aforesaid merchant, because one of the date-shells had, it seemed, put out the eye of the geni's son."—Coleridge, "Table-talk" (p. 324).

Coleridge's leading idea was, it seems (see p. xvii.), merely to compose a thrilling poem of the supernatural, founded on his friend's strange dream of a ship full of dead men. The leading idea must have been the mystery of the ocean-spaces, where anything was possible ; and the presence of those beings invisible, inhabitants of every element. And it is through these stronger motives that we hear, like a quiet flute in the turmoil of an orchestra, the tender teaching, "He prayeth best who loveth best."

A few say that the poem is an allegory, setting forth, in the form of a story,—as does "The Pilgrim's Progress"—a "profound philosophy of life." The ship, such tell us, is "life, or a life"; the voyage, progress from childhood to maturity, "when the Me begins to be conscious of itself through the pressure upon it of the Not-me." One critic says that, without such interpretation, the poem is "a mere musical farrago." Some of us may prefer musical farragos to unmusical metaphysics. Let us take the poem as Coleridge meant it, not as ingenious men may contrive to imagine that he meant it. Do not let people steal from you this beautiful dreamland story, to turn it into rather a commonplace sermon. True "interpretation" is that which is content to accept, with humble admiration, the author's simple meaning.

What is the lesson of the poem ? You will find a little of it in the beautiful stanza that tells us to love all creatures, great and small. You will find far more in the spirit of the whole poem—a spirit to which hill and plain,



Lamb, De Quincey, Southey, Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt. See what qualities—if any—their work has in common. Make, in brief, this poem a centre, a nucleus, for more reading. That will give your work system, and help you to keep together as a whole your impressions of one period of literature.

### VIII. SOME CRITICISMS ON THE POEM.

The student will be helped, in forming his opinion of the “Ancient Mariner,” by noticing what famous critics have said of it:

“It is so well known that it needs no fresh comment. Only I will say that it may seem as though this great sea-piece might have had more in it of the air and savor of the sea. Perhaps it is none the worse, and indeed any one speaking of so great and famous a poem must feel and know that it cannot but be right, although he or another may think it would be better if this were retrenched or that appended. And this poem is beyond question one of the supreme triumphs of poetry. The ‘Ancient Mariner’ has doubtless more of breadth and space, more of material force and motion, than anything else of the poet’s. And the tenderness of sentiment which touches with significant colour the pure white imagination is here no more morbid or languid, as in the earlier poems of feeling and emotion. It is soft and piteous enough, but womanly rather than effeminate: and thus serves indeed to set off the strange splendours and boundless beauties of the story. For the execution, I presume no human eye is too dull to see how perfect it is and how high in kind of perfection. Here is not the speckless and elaborate finish which shows everywhere the fresh rasp of file or chisel on its smooth and spruce excellence: this is faultless after the fashion of a flower or a tree. Thus has it grown: not thus has it been carved.”—A. C. Swinburne, “Essays and Studies,” page 264.

“Neither the poet himself nor his companions seem to have perceived the extraordinary superiority of this wonderful conception to the other poems with which it was published: for not only was its subject more elevated, but it possessed in fact all the completeness

of execution and faithfulness to its plan which they failed in. While Wordsworth represented the light in the landscape chiefly in his imitation of the prominence sometimes given by the sunshine to the most insignificant spot, Coleridge carried out the similitude on his side with a faithfulness of the grandest kind. Like a great shadow moving noiselessly over the widest sweep of mountain and plain, a pillar of cloud—or like flight of indescribable fleecy hosts of winged vapors spreading their impalpable influence like a breath, changing the face of the earth, subduing the thoughts of men, yet nothing, and capable of no interpretation—such was the great poem destined to represent in the world of poetry the effect which these mystic cloud agencies have upon the daylight and the sky.”—Mrs. Oliphant, “Literary History of England, 1790–1825.”\*

“Fancies of the strange things which may very well happen, even in broad daylight, to men shut up alone in ships far off on the sea, seem to have arisen in the human mind in all ages with a peculiar readiness, and often have about them the fascination of a certain dreamy grace, which distinguishes them from other kinds of marvellous inventions. This sort of fascination the ‘Ancient Mariner’ brings to its highest degree; it is the delicacy, the dreamy grace in his presentation of the marvellous, that makes Coleridge’s work so remarkable. The too palpable intruders from the spirit world, in almost all ghost literature, in Scott and Shakespeare even, have a kind of coarseness or crudeness. Coleridge’s power is in the very fineness with which, as with some really ghostly finger, he brings home to our inmost sense his inventions, daring as they are—the skeleton ship, the polar spirit, the inspiring of the dead bodies of the ship’s crew, the ‘Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ has the plausibility, the perfect adaptation to reason and the general aspect of life, which belongs to the marvellous when actually presented as part of a credible experience, in our dreams.”—Walter Pater, in Ward’s “English Poets.”

## IX. SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR COMPOSITIONS.

*A. Suggested Subjects for Long Compositions.*—1. The story of the poem. 2. Description and discussion of the human characters in the poem. 3. The supernatural

\* The student will do well to read all that Mrs. Oliphant has to say in this book with regard to Wordsworth and Coleridge.

figures and agencies of the poem. 4. The incident in the "Ancient Mariner" that most moves me. 5. The obvious moral of the poem. (See page xxxi.) 6. The presence or absence of moral motive in the poem. (See page xxx.) 7. Why stories of the supernatural sometimes seem true. (See page xxxiv.) 8. The lack of human character in the poem. (See page xv.) 9. The elements that produce the effect of a dream. 10. The poem regarded as a picture of the sea. Is it accurate? Is Mr. Swinburne's criticism just? (See page xxxiii.)

*B. Suggested Subjects for Short Compositions.*—1. A description of some one scene,—the Death-ship, the Harbor, the Calm. 2. The story of the Albatross, of the return to the harbor, of the rising of the dead men. 3. A short treatment of one of the topics suggested for long compositions. 4. A discussion of the picture suggested by some one stanza. 5. A discussion of the form of some part of the poem.

These are merely suggestions, a mere beginning of a list, to which each teacher may add indefinitely. See, so far as possible, that each pupil write on that phase of the poem that most interests him.

*C. Suggestions for Examination.*—To some extent build questions on the comments in the notes, and on the additional comments made in class. Do not ask questions of formal detail,—how many fathom deep the spirit slid, what the Albatross ate, in what latitude ice occurs, and the like. Ask rather questions that will lead the pupil to look into the meaning and into the poetry of the poem. The following questions may suggest others:

1. What happened to the Pilot's Boy? By what significant detail is it described?
2. Describe Life-in-Death. Why is her appearance more horrible than that of Death?
3. What is mentioned at the end of every "Part" but the

last? 4. Quote some stanza that you remember as particularly musical. Explain its form. 5. What are the most effective details in the picture of the calm? 6. "They stood as signals to the land." Who? Describe the scene. What comment was made on it in the notes?

## X. BIBLIOGRAPHY.

The standard edition of Coleridge's Poetical Works is that which appeared in 1834, the year of his death. The latest reprint, that of B. M. Pickering, 1877, is founded on this. There is also an edition by W. M. Rossetti, containing a reprint of the earliest form of the "Ancient Mariner."

For biographies, there is the "Life of Coleridge," by James Gillman (1838); "Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey," by Joseph Cottle (1847); a "Life of Coleridge" (in the English Men of Letters Series), by H. D. Traill; a "Life," in "Lives of Famous Poets," by W. M. Rossetti. The new edition of Coleridge's letters (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1895) casts not a little new light on his character and on the circumstances of his life. There is also much indirect biography contained in the writings of his friends and associates, in their letters, autobiographies, and reminiscent essays. Consult, for this, the works of De Quincey, Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, Leigh Hunt, John Foster, Hazlitt, and, later, Carlyle. Good examples of the early reviews will be found in the *Edinburgh Review* for September, 1816; in *Blackwood's Magazine* for October, 1819; and in the *North American Review* for October, 1834. Later magazine articles will be found in *Blackwood's* for November, 1871; in the *Atlantic Monthly* for April, 1880, and in the same magazine for September, 1895.



Helpful essays will be found in Edward Dowden's "Studies in Literature," in J. C. S. Shairp's "Studies in Philosophy and Poetry," in Mrs. Oliphant's "Literary History of England," and in A. C. Swinburne's "Essays and Studies." Good, too, especially for older readers, is Walter Pater's essay introducing the selections from Coleridge in Ward's "English Poets." But it would be impossible to state in little space all the books that deal with a man whose personality was so essentially interwoven with the literary life of his day.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

COLERIDGE'S LIFE.	COLERIDGE'S WORKS.	ENGLISH LITERATURE.	AMERICAN LITERATURE.	HISTORY.
1772. Born.				1774. Goldsmith died.
1781. Christ's Hospital.		1783. Crabbe, <i>The Village</i> . Blake, <i>Poetical Sketches</i> .		1783. Irving born.
		1785. Cowper, <i>The Task</i> .		1784. Johnson died.
1791. Entered Jesus College, Cambridge.		1787. Blake, <i>Songs of In- nocence</i> .		1786. De Quincey born.
1793. Entered dragoons.				1790. Franklin died.
1794. Left college finally.		1793. Burns, <i>Poems</i> .		1794. Bryant born.
1795. Met Southey.	1795. <i>Moral and Political Lectures</i> , <i>Conciones ad Populum</i> , etc.			
1795. Married Sara Fricker.	1796. <i>The Watchman</i> . <i>Poems</i> on various subjects. (Later edi- tions 1797, 1803.)			
1796. Life in Bristol.				1796. Burns died.
1797. Met Wordsworth. The year of his "poetic prime."				
1798. Continental tour.	1798. <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> (with Wordsworth).			
1799. Returned to London. First visit to the Lakes.				
1799-1803. Spent in London and at the Lakes.				

<p>1800. Went to Malta for his health. Returned to London.</p> <p>1805-1810. Spent like 1799-1803.</p>	<p>1800. Various poems in <i>The Morning Post</i>. Reprinted in pamphlet form. Translation of Walleustein.</p>	<p>1800. Cowper died.</p> <p>1803. Emerson born.</p>
<p>1804. Farewell to the Lakes. Went to London. Left his family with Southey.</p>	<p>1805. Scott, Lay of the Last Minstrel.</p> <p>1808. Scott, Marmion.</p> <p>1810. Scott, Lady of the Lake.</p> <p>1812. Byron, Childe Harold. (Cantos I. and II.)</p> <p>1813. Remorse produced at Drury Lane Theatre.</p> <p>1814. Waverley.</p>	<p>1807. Irving, Salmagundi.</p> <p>1809. Irving, Knickerbocker's History of New York.</p>
<p>1814. Went to Mr. Gilman's. Ceased, virtually, the use of opium.</p> <p>1814-1834. Lived at Mr. Gilman's.</p>	<p>1816. A Lay Sermon. Christabel.</p> <p>1817. Silylline Leaves. Another Lay Sermon. Biographia Literaria.</p> <p>1818. Zapola, Second edition of <i>The Friend</i>.</p>	<p>1811. Thackeray born.</p> <p>1812. Dickens born. Browning born.</p>
<p>1809. <i>The Friend</i>.</p>	<p>1817. Bryant, Thanatopsis.</p>	<p>1807. Longfellow born.</p> <p>1809. Holmes, Lincoln, Poe, Tennyson, Darwin, Gladstone born.</p>

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.—Continued.

COLERIDGE'S LIFE.	COLERIDGE'S WORKS.	ENGLISH LITERATURE.	AMERICAN LITERATURE.	HISTORY.
		1820. Keats, Lania, Isabella, Eve of St. Agnes, Hyperion. Shelley, Prometheus Unbound.	1819. Irving, Sketch-book.	1819. George Eliot, Lowell, Ruskin born.
		1821. De Quincey, Confessions, Marino Falerio.	1821. Cooper, The Spy.	1821. Keats died.
		1822. Lamb, Essays of Elia.	1822. Irving, Bracebridge Hall.	1822. Arnold born; Shelley died.
	1825. Aids to Reflection.	1825. Macaulay, Essay on Milton.	1823. Cooper, The Pilot.	1824. Byron died.
	1828. Poetic and Dramatic Works.	1827. Alfred and Charles Tennyson, Poems by Two Brothers.	1824. Irving, Tales of a Traveller.	1825. Huxley born.
	1829. Second edition.	1830. Tennyson, Poems, chiefly Lyrical.	1827. Poe, Tamerlane.	1827. Blake died.
		1833. Carlyle, Sartor Resartus.	1831. Poe, The Raven.	1832. Scott died.
1834. Died.	Posthumous: Complete Works; Literary Reminiscences; Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit.		1833. Longfellow, Outre-Mer.	

THE

# RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit, et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quæ loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attingit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus.

T. BURNET<sup>1</sup>: ARCHÆOL. PHIL., p. 68.

*Translation.*—"I find it easy to believe that in the universe the visible beings are outnumbered by the invisible. But who shall tell us the nature common to these, their rank, their kindreds, the signs by which they are distinguished, the gifts in which they excel? What is their task? Where is their abode? Close to full knowledge of these wonders, the mind of man has ever circled, nor ever attained the centre. Meanwhile, I trust, it will give us profit to contemplate in the mind, as in a picture, the image of this other world, greater than ours and better, lest our minds, becoming wont to the petty details of daily life, be narrowed overmuch, and sink to paltry thoughts. We must, meanwhile, keep watch, with vigilance, toward truth, preserving temperance of judgment, that we distinguish things certain from things uncertain, day from night."

<sup>1</sup> Burnet was a distinguished divine who flourished in the latter half of the seventeenth century, dying in 1715. On the account of the origin of the world contained in *Genesis* he based what for some time passed as a scientific treatise.



## PART THE FIRST.

### I.

It is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.

“By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stoppst thou me?”

### II.

“The Bridegroom’s doors are opened wide,      5  
And I am next of kin ;  
The guests are met, the feast is set :  
Mayst hear the merry din.”

The glosses—Coleridge’s prose comments in the margin—should be read carefully, both in connection with the poem, and by themselves. They were added, in *Sibylline Leaves*, some time after the poem was written, in imitation of an old custom. You will find them of help in indicating the action of the poem.

I. *It is*. A beginning common in tales and old ballads. It—the man I am going to tell you about—is. The principal figure is brought before us at once. *Ancient Mariner*. Why not *old sea-faring man*, as in the gloss at the side of the page? What difference is there in the suggestion? From what language is each phrase derived? *One of three*. Why one of *three*, rather than of four or five? (See note on XIX.) Does the fact that other passers-by are thus mentioned add to the mental picture called up by this stanza? *By thy*, etc. Abrupt, but we guess the speaker. What is gained by indirect description—that is, description introduced not formally, but as if by accident? How do you get your impression of the Mariner? What is it? Why is the Wedding-Guest introduced? Why does not the Mariner tell his tale directly to the reader? Why is *glittering* better than *shining* or *flashing*?

II. Why are *Bridegroom*, *Mariner*, etc., capitalized? *Mayst*. Notice the form of the verb used, and the effect of impatience produced by the omission of the subject.

## III.

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
 "There was a ship," quoth he. 10  
 "Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"  
 Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

## IV.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old sea-faring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye—  
 The Wedding-Guest stood still,  
 And listens like a three years' child: 15  
 The Mariner hath his will.

## V.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone;  
 He cannot choose but hear;  
 And thus spake on that ancient man,  
 The bright-eyed Mariner. 20

III. The Mariner ignores the Guest's protest. He seems not to hear it. This increases the uncanny impression. What kind of being, we ask, is this, on whom words have no effect? *There was a ship*. The ship, as, later, the Albatross, the calm, and the Death-ship, appears suddenly, as things appear in dreams, without explanation or preparation. We are in a world of wonders. *Loon*. Compare *Macbeth*, "The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon" (Act V., sc. iii., line 2). *Eftsoons*, immediately, straightway. To us the word has a more leisurely suggestion. *Dropt*. How does this verb compare in tense with *holds*? What do you observe with regard to tenses throughout the opening stanzas? What is the effect of this uncertainty of time? Observe the spelling. Can you find other words in the poem similarly spelled?

V. Does *bright*, in *bright-eyed*, suggest *glittering*? Is it not, perhaps, unfortunately cheerful in suggestion?



## VI.

“The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,  
Merrily did we drop  
Below the kirk, below the hill,  
Below the lighthouse top.

## VII.

“The sun came up upon the left, 25  
Out of the sea came he !  
And he shone bright, and on the right  
Went down into the sea.

The Mariner  
tells how the  
ship sailed  
southward  
with a good  
wind and fair  
weather, till  
it reached the  
Line.

## VIII.

“Higher and higher every day,  
Till over the mast at noon—” 30  
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,  
For he heard the loud bassoon.

VI. A moment ago we learned that there was a ship. Suddenly we are aboard and under way. *Drop*. Used in a nautical sense,—move down the coast. *Below the lighthouse top* is, in this connection, a little confusing. Probably the poet had in mind here the related idea of the lighthouse top dropping—vanishing—last of all, below the horizon.

VII. Compare the beginning of Tennyson's poem, *The Voyage*. Read, also, Longfellow's *The Discoverer of the North Cape*, which in a small degree, recalls the manner of this. Observe how quickly the story has passed into the open sea, where anything may happen.

VIII. “When the Ancient Mariner [*Was it the Ancient Mariner ?*] thought he heard ‘the loud bassoon,’ he probably heard nothing of the kind.”—F. W. Apthorp, in *Boston Symphony Orchestra Programme*. Is the criticism true? If it is, is it important?

## IX.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music ; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,  
 Red as a rose is she ;  
 Nodding their heads before her goes 35  
 The merry minstrelsy.

## X.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,  
 Yet he cannot choose but hear ;  
 And thus spake on that ancient man,  
 The bright-eyed Mariner. 40

## XI.

The ship drawn by a storm toward the south pole.

“ And now the Storm-Blast came, and he  
 Was tyrannous and strong :  
 He struck with his o’ertaking wings,  
 And chased us south along.

IX. *Their heads . . . goes.* Is this violation of the rule of concord justifiable ? Why ? Cf. “ But first the nodding minstrels go.” Coleridge, *Ballad of the Dark Ladie*. Why is *nodding* appropriate ?

X. This stanza is repeated almost verbatim from V. A critic condemns Coleridge for “ trying to awaken our feelings by the force of verbal iteration.” What do you think of the charge ?

XI. Is the “ along ” called for by the thought, or by the rhyme, or by both ? What figure of speech is used in this stanza ?

## XII.

With sloping masts and dipping prow, 45  
 As who pursued with yell and blow  
 Still treads the shadow of his foe,  
 And forward bends his head,  
 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,  
 And southward aye we fled. 50

## XIII.

And now there came both mist and snow,  
 And it grew wondrous cold :  
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,  
 As green as emerald.

## XIV.

And through the drifts the snowy cliffs 55  
 Did send a dismal sheen :  
 Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—  
 The ice was all between.

The land of  
 ice, and of  
 fearful  
 sounds, where  
 no living  
 thing was to be  
 seen.

XII. If you have ever seen a gale at sea, recall the picture. If not, try to find some good picture to help your imagination. Make a mental picture of the ship, with *sloping masts*, etc. *Treads the shadow*. What does this mean? What does it imply? How is *aye* to be pronounced in this sense? See the dictionary. This stanza contains six lines. How are they distributed? See the Introduction, III.

XIII. Suggested, it may be, by Captain James's *Strange and Dangerous Voyage*, published in London, 1633. The book describes "Ice as high as our Top-Mast-Head," which had "sharp blue corners," and made "a hollow and a hideous noise." See correspondence in the *Athenæum*, 1890. The ice, like the other apparitions, comes with no preparation.

XIV. *Drifts*. Snow drifts? Would "cliffs" then show through them? Try the word in the sense of driving clouds of mist and snow. *Cliffs*. An old form, a confusion, perhaps, of "cliffs" and "clefts." Cf. *Robinson Crusoe*, "climbed up the cliffs of the shore." *Sheen*. Like the cold light of a snow-storm. *All between*. Between what? How is *between* used here?

## XV.

The ice was here, the ice was there,  
 The ice was all around : 60  
 It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,  
 Like noises in a swound !

## XVI.

Till a great  
 sea-bird,  
 called the  
 Albatross,  
 came through  
 the snow-fog,  
 and was re-  
 ceived with  
 great joy and  
 hospitality

At length did cross an Albatross :  
 Thorough the fog it came ;  
 As if it had been a Christian soul, 65  
 We hailed it in God's name.

## XVII.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,  
 And round and round it flew.  
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;  
 The helmsman steered us through ! 70

XV. *Swound*. Archaic for "swoon." Like noises that one hears when swooning. Try to imagine them.

XVI. *Did cross*. Crossed our course. Compare the common phrase, "I came across it." *Thorough*. The old form of "through" is used here for metrical convenience. Why would not "through" fit as well? Realize, as vividly as you can, the delight of these men, so long out of sight of land, at meeting a living thing.

XVII. *Had eat*. A form of the verb now obsolete and inelegant. *Thunder-fit*. A noise like thunder, "A burst of thunder-sound." *Steered us through*. Recall the old story of the Argo and the Symplegades. A dim recollection of it may have been in Coleridge's mind. See Murray's *Manual of Mythology*, pp. 273-274. Read William Morris's *Jason*. See, too, Swinburne :

"When the oars won their way  
 Where the narrowing Symplegades whitened the straits of Propontis with spray."

## XVIII.

And a good south wind sprung up behind ;  
 The Albatross did follow,  
 And every day, for food or play,  
 Came to the mariners' hollo !

and lo! the  
 Albatross  
 proveth a bird  
 of good omen,  
 and followeth  
 the ship as it  
 returned  
 northward,  
 through fog  
 and floating  
 ice.

## XIX.

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, 75  
 It perched for vespers nine ;  
 Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,  
 Glimmered the white moon-shine."

## XX.

" God save thee, ancient Mariner !  
 From the fiends, that plague thee thus !— 80  
 Why lookst thou so ?"—" With my cross-bow  
 I shot the Albatross."

The ancient  
 Mariner  
 inhospitably  
 killeth the  
 pious bird of  
 good omen.

XIX. *Shroud*. One of the supporting ropes that run from the mast-head to the side of the ship. *Vespers nine*. *Vespers* suggests the religion of the world in the time in which the scene is laid. What was it ? *Nine*. The prevailing numbers in this poem are three, five, seven, and nine. The odd numbers have always been regarded as particularly appropriate to the mystical or supernatural. See, for example, Rossetti's *Blessed Damozel* :

"She had three lilies in her hand,  
 And the stars in her hair were seven."

Tennyson writes, in the *Hesperides* :

". . . Five and three,  
 Let it not be noised abroad, make an awful mystery."

There are, you remember, nine muses, seven wonders of the world, three fates, etc.

XX. *God save thee!* Why does he say this ? What has happened ? Note the abruptness of the answer. It begins in the middle of the line. Can you find another line so abruptly broken in the middle ? See how this form emphasizes the answer. *Cross-bow*. In what age of the world was the cross-bow used ? What was it ? Each part ends with mention of the Albatross. Why ?

## PART THE SECOND.

### XXI.

“THE Sun now rose upon the right :  
Out of the sea came he,  
Still hid in mist, and on the left 85  
Went down into the sea.

### XXII.

And the good south wind still blew behind,  
But no sweet bird did follow,  
Nor any day, for food or play,  
Came to the mariners' hollo ! 90

### XXIII.

His ship-  
mates cry out  
against the  
ancient Mari-  
ner, for killing  
the bird of  
good luck.

And I had done a hellish thing,  
And it would work 'em woe :  
For all averred, I had killed the bird  
That made the breeze to blow.  
'Ah, wretch !' said they, 'the bird to slay, 95  
That made the breeze to blow !'

XXI. Varied from XXVII. Why is the change first mentioned here ? They had already been sailing north “for vespers nine.”

XXII. Varied from what previous stanza ?

XXIII. *'Em.* Would a writer of to-day be likely to use this in a serious poem, even if, according to one critic, it is “a sign not of barbarism, but of a fondness for the choicest of Old English” ? What contractions are not out of place in poetry ?

## XXIV.

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,  
 The glorious Sun uprist :  
 Then all averred, I had killed the bird  
 That brought the fog and mist. 100  
 'Twas right,' said they, 'such birds to slay,  
 That bring the fog and mist.'

## XXV.

The fair breeze continues ; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
 The furrow followed free :  
 We were the first that ever burst 105  
 Into that silent sea.

## XXVI.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,  
 'Twas sad as sad could be ;  
 And we did speak only to break  
 The silence of the sea ! 110

XXIV. Pause after *red*. The phrase *like God's own head* modifies *Sun*. Read carelessly, the stanza makes nonsense.

XXV. The original edition reads *followed free*. Coleridge changed it to "streamed off free," observing that, seen from shipboard the furrow did not follow, but streamed off. Later, however, he resumed the first form, for the sake of smoothness of sound ; also, to some extent, for the sake of swiftness. Compare the effect of the two. Observe that this weighing of forms must be the constant task of every conscientious writer. *Into that silent sea*. The silent sea comes as suddenly as the ice and the Albatross. Compare a similar phrase in *Kubla Khan* :

"Where Alph the sacred river ran  
 Through caverns measureless to man,  
 Down to a sunless sea."

XXVI. Note how the speed of line 105 is checked in the halting movement of line 107. You can feel the ship stop. Why is it hard to read line 107 rapidly ? Why did the writer put such a line here ? Why not *down dropt the sails*, keeping the same order as the first clause ? This stanza ends with the same rhyme-word, *sea*, as the last. Note the dreary effect.

## XXVII.

All in a hot and copper sky,  
 The bloody Sun, at noon,  
 Right up above the mast did stand,  
 No bigger than the Moon.

## XXVIII.

Day after day, day after day, 115  
 We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;  
 As idle as a painted ship  
 Upon a painted ocean.

## XXIX.

Water, water, everywhere,  
 And all the boards did shrink ; 120  
 Water, water, everywhere,  
 Nor any drop to drink.

## XXX.

The very deep did rot : O Christ !  
 That ever this should be !  
 Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs 125  
 Upon the slimy sea.

XXVII. *All*. What does it mean here ? Note the effect of each adjective. Is any superfluous ? Why is *copper* appropriate ?

XXVIII. *Day after day*. The repetition suggests the monotony. *Stuck*. Not a pretty word ; but can you find a pretty word that shall be as forcible ?

XXIX. Why could they not drink it ? Why was not the presence of the water cooling ?

XXX. *With legs*. What kind of slimy things does this suggest ? The repetition of *slimy* adds force.



## XXXI.

About, about, in reel and rout  
 The death-fires danced at night;  
 The water, like a witch's oils,  
 Burnt green, and blue, and white. 130

## XXXII.

And some in dreams assured were  
 Of the Spirit that plagued us so:  
 Nine fathom deep he had followed us  
 From the land of mist and snow.

A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor

angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

## XXXIII.

And every tongue, through utter drought, 135  
 Was withered at the root;  
 We could not speak, no more than if  
 We had been choked with soot.

XXXI. *Rout*. See dictionary. *Death-fires*. Phosphoric lights, corpse-candles. Perhaps, too, St. Elmo's fires, the mast-head lights that sailors call "corposants." *Witch's oils*. The use of strange fires was a common device of necromancers.

XXXII. Is the reader really supposed to look up these learned authorities mentioned in the gloss? Can you find any other reason for their being mentioned here? *Assured were*. Learned certainly what they had suspected. Perhaps merely "learned." What Latin idiom is the phrase a little like? A fathom is six feet. Here the actual depth is of little moment. *Nine* is chosen merely as a "mystical" number. The Spirit keeps out of sight. Would it be easy, without loss to the effect on our imagination, to make him appear on the deck and speak to the Mariner? Read the criticism of Walter Pater, on page xxxiv. *Plagued*. Not used so trivially as by people now.

XXXIII. The last two lines seem a little prosaic. Why? Is there a double negative in the third line? Why not?

## XXXIV.

The ship-  
mates in their  
sore distress  
would fain  
throw the  
whole guilt on  
the ancient  
Mariner : in  
sign whereof  
they hang the  
dead sea-bird  
reund his neck.

Ah ! well-a-day ! what evil looks  
Had I from old and young !  
Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.

140

XXXIV. *Well-a-day*. A mixture of "walaway" (an old exclamation of distress) and "Woe's the day !" The Albatross appears again at the end of the part.

## PART THE THIRD.

### XXXV.

THERE passed a weary time. Each throat  
Was parched, and glazed each eye.  
A weary time ! a weary time ! 144  
How glazed each weary eye !  
When looking westward, I beheld  
A something in the sky.

The ancient  
Mariner be-  
holdeth a sign  
in the element  
afar off.

### XXXVI.

At first it seemed a little speck,  
And then it seemed a mist : 150  
It moved and moved, and took at last  
A certain shape, I wist.

### XXXVII.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !  
And still it neared and neared :  
As if it dodged a water-sprite, 155  
It plunged and tacked and veered.

XXXV. The indefinite *something* rouses our curiosity as it did the Mariner's.

XXXVI. *I wist*. Inserted for meaning, or for rhyme ?

XXXVII. *Water-sprite*. This comparison keeps us in touch with the supernatural. *Tacked*. Not to be taken as a nautical term. It expresses here merely wayward motion.

## XXXVIII.

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
 We could nor laugh nor wail;  
 Through utter drought all dumb we stood!  
 I bit my arm, I sucked the blood, 160  
 And cried, A sail! a sail!

## XXXIX.

A flash of joy.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
 Agape they heard me call:  
 Gramercy! they for joy did grin,  
 And all at once their breath drew in, 165  
 As they were drinking all.

XXXVIII. The extra line adds suspense. See page xxiv. Note the effect of the means by which the Mariner found his voice. It was not simply "with difficulty."

XXXIX. *Gramercy*. Originally "*grand merci*," great thanks. Here merely intensive. *For joy did grin*. "I took the thought of grinning for joy from poor Burnett's remark to me when we had climbed to the top of Plinlimmon, and were nearly dead with thirst. We could not speak for the constriction till we found a little puddle under a stone. He said to me, 'You grinned like an idiot.' He had done the same."—Coleridge, *Table-talk*. But is not the realism a trifle grotesque? *As they were drinking*. Note the appropriateness of the figure.

## XL.

See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !

Hither to work us weal,—

Without a breeze, without a tide,

She steadies with upright keel !

170

And horror follows. For can it be a *ship* that comes onward without wind or tide ?

## XLI.

The western wave was all a-flame,

The day was well-nigh done !

Almost upon the western wave

Rested the broad bright Sun ;

When that strange shape drove suddenly 175

Betwixt us and the Sun.

XL. *She steadies.* Used chiefly of vessels. Are the last two lines of the stanza as joyful as the first ? Is there not dread mixed with them ? Compare Longfellow's *Phantom Ship* :

“ On she came with a crowd of canvas,  
Right against the wind that blew,  
Until the eye could distinguish  
The faces of her crew.”

The “Flying Dutchman” always came, as in the old ballad, “to windward.” The first steamships terrified ignorant sailors by doing the same thing. Compare Longfellow's *Ballad of Carmilhan* :

“ A ghostly ship, with a ghostly crew,  
In tempests she appears ;  
And before the gale, or against the gale,  
She sails without a rag of sail,  
Without a helmsman steers.”

The whole poem, in many ways, will recall the *Ancient Mariner*.

XLI. With this comes certainty of the supernatural. The sail becomes *that strange shape*. (One editor reads “ship.”) Observe the repetition of the rhyme-word *Sun*. Compare Poe's *Annabel Lee* :

“ In her sepulchre there by the sea,  
In her tomb by the sounding sea.”

*Broad.* What does this imply ? Is the sun elongated, or simply an enlarged circle ?

## XLII.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,  
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace!)  
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peered,  
 With broad and burning face.

180

It seemeth  
 him but the  
 skeleton of a  
 ship.

## XLIII.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud,)  
 How fast she nears and nears!  
 Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,  
 Like restless gossameres?

## XLIV.

Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun 185  
 Did peer as through a grate?  
 And is that Woman all her crew?  
 Is that a Death? and are there two?  
 Is Death that Woman's mate?

And its ribs  
 are seen as  
 bars on the  
 face of the set-  
 ting Sun.  
 The Spectre-  
 Woman and her  
 Death-mate,  
 and no other on  
 board the skel-  
 eton-ship.

XLII. *Heaven's Mother.* See note on stanza XIX. Were his feelings joyful now?

XLIII. Is he glad that she is nearing fast? Why is *her* italicized? Read the line aloud. Why is *Woman* capitalized? Why *a Death*? Why not simply *Death*?

## XLV.

Like vessel,  
like crew !

Her lips were red, her looks were free,                   190  
Her locks were yellow as gold :  
Her skin was as white as leprosy,  
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,  
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

## XLVI.

Death and  
Life-in-  
Death have  
diced for the  
ship's crew,  
and she (the  
latter) winneth  
the ancient  
Mariner.

The naked hulk alongside came,                   195  
And the twain were casting dice ;  
'The game is done ! I've won, I've won !'  
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

## XLVII.

No twilight  
within the  
courts of the  
Sun.

The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :  
At one stride comes the dark ;                   200  
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,  
Off shot the spectre-bark.

XLV. Why is Death not described as well as Life-in-Death ? Red lips and golden hair are certainly not in themselves repelling. It is only when we join to them *skin as white as leprosy* that the picture becomes horrible,—the more horrible for the contrast. Have these contradictory details any fitness to the character ? Think of her name.

XLVI. Naked even of planking, since the ribs show. Why does she whistle ? Why thrice ? See note on XIX. Originally another stanza followed this :

“ A gust of winde sterte up behind,  
And whistled through his bones ;  
Through the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth,  
Half whistles and half groans.”

What reason can you see for omitting it ?

XLVII. Note the rapidity of the scene. To what words is it chiefly due ? What would cause the “whisper” ? Observe the very poetical form of the gloss. What is meant by it ? Where are the “courts of the sun” ?





## L.

His shipmates  
drop down  
dead.

Four times fifty living men,  
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)  
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,  
They dropped down one by one.

## LI.

But Life-in-  
Death be-  
gins her work  
on the ancient  
Mariner.

The souls did from their bodies fly,— 220  
They fled to bliss or woe !  
And every soul, it passed me by,  
Like the whizz of my cross-bow !”

L. *Thump, lump.* This rhyme sounds, to the modern ear, undignified. Perhaps this is because so many undignified words—“bump,” “dump,” “hump,” etc.—end in this way. But the sound seems to have had more dignity. In an old ballad we are told quite seriously of a man who was “in doleful dumps.”

LI. *And every soul.* Compare the last lines of Rossetti's *Sister Helen* :

“ Ah ! what white thing at the door has crossed,  
Sister Helen ?

Ah ! what is this that sighs in the frost ?”

“ A soul that's lost as mine is lost,  
Little brother !”

(*Oh Mother, Mary Mother,  
Lost, lost, all lost between Hell and Heaven !*)

The last lines of this part carry us back to the Albatross.

## PART THE FOURTH.

### LII.

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him;

“ I FEAR thee, ancient Mariner !  
I fear thy skinny hand !  
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,  
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

225

### LIII.

“ I fear thee, and thy glittering eye,  
And thy skinny hand, so brown.”—

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

“ Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest !  
This body dropt not down.

230

### LIV.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
Alone on a wide, wide sea !  
And never a saint took pity on  
My soul in agony.

235

LII. The fear is explained in the gloss. Read LII. in close connection with what precedes. Lines three and four were composed by Wordsworth. Do they join on smoothly, or can you detect the patch? *Ribbed*. Sea-sand, at low tide, is marked by ripples, left by the receding waves.

LIV. Note the repeated *alone*, with its long vowel. See above, in the quotation from Rossetti, a similar repetition of “lost.” *Never a saint*. Why *never* instead of “not”? Is there a difference in force? In what churches are saints prayed to?

## LV.

He despiseth  
the creatures  
of the calm.

The many men, so beautiful !  
And they all dead did lie :  
And a thousand thousand slimy things  
Lived on ; and so did I.

## LVI.

And envieth  
that they  
should live,  
and so many  
lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea, 240  
And drew my eyes away :  
I looked upon the rotting deck,  
And there the dead men lay.

## LVII.

I looked to Heaven and tried to pray ;  
But or ever a prayer had gusht, 245  
A wicked whisper came, and made  
My heart as dry as dust.

LV. *So beautiful.* In themselves ? Lamb—in a perverse mood—suggested that they were “Vagabonds, all covered with pitch.” But what does Coleridge mean ? Does he not mean beautiful as higher works of God, beautiful in comparison with the “slimy things” that lived on ? The Mariner’s cure was not yet complete. He could not yet love and admire all that God had made.

LVI. *Rotting.* Recall, if you have ever seen one, a pool of stagnant salt water. What do you observe in the form and sound of lines one and three ?

LVII. What is the heart compared to ? Is *gusht* and *dust* a good rhyme ? How wou’d you spell *gusht* ?

## LVIII.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,  
 And the balls like pulses beat ;  
 For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the  
 sky 250  
 Lay like a load on my weary eye,  
 And the dead were at my feet.

## LIX.

But the curse  
 liveth for him  
 in the eye of  
 the dead men.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,  
 Nor rot nor reek did they :  
 The look with which they looked on me 255  
 Had never passed away.

## LX.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell  
 A spirit from on high ;  
 But oh ! more horrible than that  
 Is a curse in a dead man's eye ! 260  
 Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,  
 And yet I could not die.

LVIII. Notice the anapestic third line. What alliteration do you observe ?

LIX. *Reek*. See the dictionary. This is the first stage of the punishment ; the beginning of Life-in-Death.

LX. *Seven*. See note on stanza XIX.

## LXI.

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still

The moving Moon went up the sky,  
And nowhere did abide :  
Softly she was going up,  
And a star or two beside—

265

## LXII.

sojourn, yet still move onward ; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,  
Like April hoar-frost spread ;  
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,  
The charmed water burnt away  
A still and awful red.

270

there is a silent joy at their arrival.

## LXIII.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,  
I watched the water-snakes :  
They moved in tracks of shining white,  
And when they reared, the elfish light  
Fell off in hoary flakes.

275

LXI. Read the gloss aloud. What poetical thought is in it that is not in the text? While it is prose in form, it is in substance as poetical as any part of the poem.

LXII. Written continuously with LXI., yet with an independent rhyme system.

LXIII. *Elfish*, a word of indefinite supernatural suggestion.

“Hark, 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,  
Of haggard seeming.”—Keats, *Eve of St. Agnes*.

## LXIV.

Within the shadow of the ship  
 I watched their rich attire :  
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
 They coiled and swam ; and every track      280  
 Was a flash of golden fire.

## LXV.

Their beauty  
 and their  
 happiness.

O happy living things ! no tongue  
 Their beauty might declare :  
 A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
 And I blessed them unaware !      285  
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
 And I blessed them unaware !

He blesseth  
 them in his  
 heart.

## LXVI.

The spell be-  
 gins to break.

The selfsame moment I could pray ;  
 And from my neck so free  
 The Albatross fell off, and sank      290  
 Like lead into the sea.

LXIV. Their color appears more clearly in the *still and awful red* of the ship's shadow. Recall, if you have seen it, the phosphorescence of sea-water.

LXV. They are no longer *slimy things* ; they, too, are beautiful. The Mariner's perception of this removes, or begins to remove, the curse. Compare, for form, stanzas XXIII., XXIV., and XLI.

LXVI. What does *so free* modify ? *Albatross* or *neck* ? What scene in *Pilgrim's Progress* does this recall ? The Albatross carries the weight of offence with it. The story is, for the instant, allegorical.

## PART THE FIFTH.

### LXVII.

OH sleep ! it is a gentle thing,  
Beloved from pole to pole !  
To Mary Queen the praise be given !  
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven, 295  
That slid into my soul.

### LXVIII.

The silly buckets on the deck,  
That had so long remained,  
I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;  
And when I awoke, it rained. 300

### LXIX.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,  
My garments all were dank ;  
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,  
And still my body drank.

LXVII. *Sleep.* Sleep is much praised by poets. See *Macbeth*. II., ii., 7 ; the second part of *King Henry IV.*, i., 5-31 ; also Keats, *Endymion*, Book i., line 453, and what immediately follows. See, too, the sonnet by Sir Philip Sidney, beginning :

“ Come, Sleep ! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,  
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe.”

Probably you can recall other passages. *Mary Queen.* See stanza XIX. *Slid.* Why more appropriate than “ came ” ?

LXVIII. *Silly.* The word first meant *blessed*, then *innocent*, then *simple* ; finally, *foolishly simple*. Here, *empty*, *useless*. Why is their uselessness here significant ?

LXIX. *Sure.* This same form occurred in the same construction in stanza LXV. Would you use it in that way now ?

## LXX.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs :           305  
 I was so light—almost  
 I thought that I had died in sleep,  
 And was a blessèd ghost.

## LXXI.

He heareth  
 sounds, and  
 seeth strange  
 sights and  
 commotions in  
 the sky and  
 the element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind :  
 It did not come anear ;                           310  
 But with its sound it shook the sails,  
 That were so thin and sere.

## LXXII.

The upper air burst into life !  
 And a hundred fire-flags sheen,  
 To and fro they were hurried about ;           315  
 And to and fro, and in and out,  
 The wan stars danced between.

LXX. *So light*. Remember how you have felt after a long illness. *Almost* modifies *thought*. Pause after *light*. *A blessed ghost*, as opposed to a lost, damned ghost ; or a *blessed ghost*, as opposed to a very miserable living man.

LXXI. *Anear*. What is the modern form ? *Sere*. Usually applied to what ? What implied comparison ? What is the meaning of *element* in the gloss ? See dictionary. *Cf.* gloss on XXXII.

LXXII. Examine the construction of the second line. *Fire-flags* is the subject. The sentence is pleonastic in form. *Sheen* is an adjective modifying *flags*. We have had it before as a noun. See XIV. What lights, sometimes seen in the sky, might be called *fire-flags* ? In what quarter of the heavens do they appear ?



## LXXIII.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,  
 And the sails did sigh like sedge ;  
 And the rain poured down from one black  
 cloud ; 320  
 The Moon was at its edge.

## LXXIV.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still  
 The Moon was at its side :  
 Like waters shot from some high crag,  
 The lightning fell with never a jag, 325  
 A river steep and wide.

## LXXV.

The bodies of  
 the ship's  
 crew are in-  
 spired, and  
 the ship moves  
 on ;

The loud wind never reached the ship,  
 Yet now the ship moved on !  
 Beneath the lightning and the Moon  
 The dead men gave a groan. 330

## LXXVI.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,  
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;  
 It had been strange, even in a dream,  
 To have seen those dead men rise.

LXXIII. *Sedge*. The figure is faint to us, since the word is strange. Recall the sound of the wind in rushes, tall grass, or corn.

LXXIV. Pause till you see the picture definitely.

LXXV. Suppose the wind had reached the ship—would the story have been so effective ?

LXXVI. *Had*. What mood ? How used ? *To have seen*. Should not this be, properly, “to see” ?

## LXXVII.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on ; 335  
 Yet never a breeze up-blew ;  
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,  
 Where they were wont to do :  
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—  
 We were a ghastly crew. 340

## LXXVIII.

The body of my brother's son  
 Stood by me, knee to knee :  
 The body and I pulled at one rope,  
 But he said naught to me."

## LXXIX.

But not by  
 the souls of  
 the men, nor  
 by demons of  
 earth or mid-  
 dle air, but by  
 a blessed troop  
 of angelic  
 spirits, sent  
 down by the  
 invocation of  
 the guardian  
 saint.

" I fear thee, ancient Mariner !" 345  
 " Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !  
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,  
 Which to their corpses came again,  
 But a troop of spirits blest :

## LXXX.

For when it dawned—they dropped their  
 arms, 350  
 And clustered round the mast ;  
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,  
 And from their bodies passed.

LXXVIII. *The body . . . he.* Incongruous. But can you change *he* to *it* ?

LXXIX. What previous stanza does this recall ?

LXXX. What, in the description, hints that not the bodies, but the spirits, sing ?

## LXXXI.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,  
 Then darted to the Sun ; 355  
 Slowly the sounds came back again,  
 Now mixed, now one by one.

## LXXXII.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky  
 I heard the sky-lark sing ;  
 Sometimes all little birds that are, 360  
 How they seemed to fill the sea and air  
 With their sweet jargoning !

## LXXXIII.

And now 'twas like all instruments,  
 Now like a lonely flute ;  
 And now it is an angel's song, 365  
 That makes the heavens be mute.

## LXXXIV.

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on  
 A pleasant noise till noon,  
 A noise like of a hidden brook  
 In the leafy month of June, 370  
 That to the sleeping woods all night  
 Singeth a quiet tune.

LXXXII. *A-dropping.* *A* is the old "on,"—in the act of dropping. Compare "a-fishing." *Sky-lark.* An American bird? Read Wordsworth's *Ode to a Skylark*, and Shelley's. Which do you prefer? *Jargoning.* The confused sound of a flock of birds.

LXXXIII. Note the music in this and the following stanzas. Observe the alliteration in *like, lonely, makes, mute, noise, noon, sleeping, singeth.* Would you use "be" in this way in prose?

LXXXIV. Why in June rather than in December? Why at night, in sleeping woods? How does all this detail help? *Like of.* Explain.

## LXXXV.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,  
 Yet never a breeze did breathe :  
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship, 375  
 Moved onward from beneath.

## LXXXVI.

The lonesome  
 Spirit from the  
 south-pole  
 carries on the  
 ship as far as  
 the Line, in  
 obedience to  
 the angelic  
 troop, but  
 still requireth  
 vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,  
 From the land of mist and snow,  
 The Spirit slid : and it was he 380  
 That made the ship to go.  
 The sails at noon left off their tune  
 And the ship stood still also.

## LXXXVII.

The Sun, right up above the mast,  
 Had fixed her to the ocean :  
 But in a minute she 'gan stir, 385  
 With a short uneasy motion—  
 Backwards and forwards half her length  
 With a short uneasy motion.

LXXXV. Note the alliteration.

LXXXVI. Repeated, in part, from what stanza? *Slid*. Why is this better than *went*, *followed*, or some such word? Here there is an inconsistency. The gloss to stanza XXV. says: "The ship sails northward, even till it reaches the Line." Here the Spirit carries the ship as far as the Line. How can he, if it be already there? Either the poet forgot the former stanza, or felt that poetic geography may take licenses.

LXXXVII. What peculiarity of the stanza suggests the *uneasy motion*?

## LXXXVIII.

Then like a pawing horse let go,  
 She made a sudden bound ; 390  
 It flung the blood into my head,  
 And I fell down in a swound.

## LXXXIX.

How long in that same fit I lay,  
 I have not to declare ;  
 But ere my living life returned, 395  
 I heard and in my soul discerned  
 Two voices in the air.

## XC.

‘ Is it he ? ’ quoth one, ‘ Is this the man ?  
 By him who died on cross,  
 With his cruel bow he laid full low, 400  
 The harmless Albatross.

## XCI.

The spirit who bideth by himself  
 In the land of mist and snow,  
 He loved the bird that loved the man  
 Who shot him with his bow.’ 405

LXXXVIII. *Swound*. Met once before. Where ?

LXXXIX. *Have not to*. Cannot. *Living life*. Is *living* superfluous ? Is there, in this poem, life not living ? *Discerned*. Spirit voices are perceptible to the spirit as well as to ears of flesh.

XCI. Note the musical reiteration of *loved*.

## XCII.

The other was a softer voice,  
As soft as honey-dew :  
Quoth he, ' The man hath penance done,  
And penance more will do.'

XCII. *Honey-dew.* Just what is *honey-dew*? See dictionary. Did the poet care just what it meant, in this case, or did he choose the words *honey* and *dew* for their suggestion of dropping sweetness? *Will do.* Observe that it is not *shall do.* The speaker merely knows **of** the punishment. A higher power inflicts it.

## PART THE SIXTH.

### XCIII.

FIRST VOICE.

‘ But tell me, tell me ! speak again, 410  
Thy soft response renewing—  
What makes that ship drive on so fast ?  
What is the Ocean doing ? ’

### XCIV.

SECOND VOICE.

‘ Still as a slave before his lord,  
The Ocean hath no blast. 415  
His great bright eye most silently  
Up to the Moon is cast—

XCIV. *Still*, etc. Coleridge borrows from his own play *Osorio* :

“ O woman,  
I have stood silent as a slave before thee.”

*Great eye*. Here he perhaps recalls a stanza by Sir John Davies :

“ For lo the Sea that fleets about the land,  
And like a girdle clips her solid waist,  
Music and measure both doth understand ;  
For his great crystal eye is ever cast  
Up to the Moon and on her fixèd fast.”

— *Orchestra, a Poeme of Dauncing.*

Compare Keats :

“ O Moon, far-spooming Ocean bows to thee.”—*Endymion.*

## XCV.

If he may know which way to go ;  
 For she guides him smooth or grim.  
 See, brother, see ! how graciously                   420  
 She looketh down on him.'

## XCVI.

## FIRST VOICE.

'But why drives on that ship so fast,  
 Without or wave or wind ?'

## SECOND VOICE.

'The air is cut away before,  
 And closes from behind.                                   425

## XCVII.

Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !  
 Or we shall be belated :  
 For slow and slow that ship will go,  
 When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

## XCVIII.

I woke, and we were sailing on                                   430  
 As in a gentle weather :  
 'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high ;  
 The dead men stood together.

XCVI. *Or.* What would this be in prose ?

XCVII. *Slow and slow.* How different in effect from "slower and slower" ? *Abated.* Not ordinarily applied to so passive a state.

XCVIII. *A weather.* Why a ?

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance ; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

The supernatural motion is retarded ; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.



## XCIX.

All stood together on the deck,  
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter : 435  
 All fixed on me their stony eyes  
 That in the Moon did glitter.

## C.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,  
 Had never passed away :  
 I could not draw my eyes from theirs, 440  
 Nor turn them up to pray.

## CI.

And now this spell was snapt : once more  
 I viewed the ocean green,  
 And looked far forth, yet little saw  
 Of what had else been seen— 445

## CII.

Like one that on a lonesome road  
 Doth walk in fear and dread,  
 And having once turned round, walks on,  
 And turns no more his head ;  
 Because he knows a frightful fiend 450  
 Doth close behind him tread.

XCIX. *Charnel-dungeon.* See dictionary.

CI. *Green.* Is the ocean actually *green* by moonlight ?

## CIII.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,  
 Nor sound nor motion made :  
 Its path was not upon the sea,  
 In ripple or in shade. 455

## CIV.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek  
 Like a meadow-gale of spring—  
 It mingled strangely with my fears,  
 Yet it felt like a welcoming.

## CV.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460  
 Yet she sailed softly too :  
 Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—  
 On me alone it blew.

## CVI.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed  
 The light-house top I see ? 465  
 Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?  
 Is this mine own countree ?

And the an-  
 cient Mariner  
 beholdeth his  
 native  
 country.

CIII. Visible either by a ripple or by a belt of darker water. But is breeze on moonlit water dark ?

CIV. *Gale*. In what sense ? *Welcoming*. "Wel'coming'." Note the secondary stress, thrown by the metre on the last syllable. It is not so strong as the primary. Cf. *mariner*, stanza I.

CV. Note parallel form of lines 1 and 3.

CVI. The landmarks reappear in reversed order. They come without warning. Observe the miraculous swiftness of the journey. In what gloss is comment made on it ? *Countree*. A ballad form. Compare the ballad of *Thomas the Rhymer* :

" And they waded through blude aboon the knee,  
 For a' the blude that's shed on earth  
 Rins through the springs o' that countrie."

"Own country" and "ain country" are common in verse.

## CVII.

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,  
 And I with sobs did pray—  
 'O let me be awake, my God !  
 Or let me sleep alway.'

470

## CVIII.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,  
 So smoothly it was strewn !  
 And on the bay the moonlight lay,  
 And the shadow of the Moon.

475

## CIX.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,  
 That stands above the rock :  
 The moonlight steeped in silentness  
 The steady weathercock.

## CX.

And the bay was white with silent light,  
 Till rising from the same,  
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,  
 In crimson colours came.

480

The angelic  
 spirits leave  
 the dead  
 bodies,

CVII. *O let, etc.* "Let this prove real. If it be dream, let me dream forever."

CVIII. *Strewn.* Spread evenly with *level light*. Observe how melodiously the sound of *moon* is anticipated in *moonlight*. *Shadow.* Reflected image.

CIX. What does *steady* imply here? Observe the alliteration: *stands, steeped, steady*.

CX. His back is turned to the deck. He sees the reflected images first.

## CXI.

And appear  
in their own  
forms of light.

A little distance from the prow  
Those crimson shadows were : 485  
I turned my eyes upon the deck—  
Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !

## CXII.

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,  
And, by the holy rood !  
A man all light, a seraph-man, 490  
On every corse there stood.

## CXIII.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :  
It was a heavenly sight !  
They stood as signals to the land,  
Each one a lovely light : 495

## CXIV.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,  
No voice did they impart—  
No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank  
Like music on my heart.

CXII. *Rood*. Cross. Compare the term *rood-screen*, used of the cross-bearing screen in many Anglican and Catholic churches. *Seraph-man*. Compare Milton's

"The helmed cherubim,  
And sworded seraphim,  
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed."

—*Hymn on the Nativity*.

CXIII. *Signals*. Vessels at night summon a pilot by a flare, a flame blazing from the deck, lighting spars and sails. Perhaps such a sight suggested to Coleridge this picture.

CXIV. *Impart*. An odd use of the word.

## CXV.

But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500  
 I heard the Pilot's cheer ;  
 My head was turned perforce away,  
 And I saw a boat appear.

## CXVI.

The Pilot, and the Pilot's boy,  
 I heard them coming fast : 505  
 Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy  
 The dead men could not blast.

## CXVII.

I saw a third—I heard his voice :  
 It is the Hermit good !  
 He singeth loud his godly hymns 510  
 That he makes in the wood.  
 He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away  
 The Albatross's blood.

CXV. *Cheer.* In what sense ?

CXVI. *A joy the dead, etc.* Insert *that*. A joy that the presence of the dead could not overcome.

CXVII. Why is the Hermit introduced ? *Shrieve.* See dictionary.

## PART THE SEVENTH.

### CXVIII.

The Hermit of  
the wood

THIS Hermit good lives in that wood  
Which slopes down to the sea : 515  
How loudly his sweet voice he rears !  
He loves to talk with marineres  
That come from a far countree.

### CXIX.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—  
He hath a cushion plump : 520  
It is the moss that wholly hides  
The rotted old oak-stump.

### CXX.

The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,  
'Why this is strange, I trow !  
Where are those lights so many and fair, 525  
'That signal made but now ?'

CXVIII. Why seven parts ? See note on XIX.

CXIX. How does this help the story ? Would a priest from the town have done as well ?

CXX. *Skiff-boat*. With us, the first part of the word would be enough. *Trow*. See dictionary.

## CXXI.

Approacheth  
the ship with  
wonder.

‘Strange, by my faith!’ the Hermit said—  
 ‘And they answered not our cheer!  
 The planks look warped! and see those sails  
 How thin they are and sere! 530  
 I never saw aught like to them,  
 Unless perchance it were

## CXXII.

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag  
 My forest-brook along;  
 When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, 535  
 And the owlet whoops to the wolf below  
 That eats the she-wolf’s young.’

## CXXIII.

‘Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look’—  
 (The Pilot made reply)  
 ‘I am a-feared’—‘Push on, push on!’ 540  
 Said the Hermit cheerily.

## CXXIV.

The boat came closer to the ship,  
 But I nor spake nor stirred;  
 The boat came close beneath the ship,  
 And straight a sound was heard. 545

CXXI. Is *sere* and *were* a perfect rhyme? Note how the construction of the stanza runs over to the next.

CXXII. *Tod*. Bush. The description seems a little disproportionate. Does it add to our idea of leaves, or of sails?

CXXIII. *A-feared*. Cf. “a-thirst,” “an-hungered.”

CXXIV. and CXXV. Note the approach of the sound. Would a sudden burst, a *thunder-fit*, have been so effective? How does the *sinking* of the ship aid the plan of the story?

## CXXV.

The ship sud-  
denly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,  
Still louder and more dread :  
It reached the ship, it split the bay ;  
The ship went down like lead.

## CXXVI.

The ancient  
Mariner is  
saved in the  
Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,     550  
Which sky and ocean smote,  
Like one that hath been seven days drowned  
My body lay afloat ;  
But swift as dreams, myself I found  
Within the Pilot's boat.                     555

## CXXVII.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,  
The boat spun round and round :  
And all was still, save that the hill  
Was telling of the sound.

## CXXVIII.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked     560  
And fell down in a fit ;  
The Holy Hermit raised his eyes  
And prayed where he did sit.

CXXVI. *Seven.* See note to XIX. *As dreams.* See note to III.

CXXVII. Note how the splitting of the bay and the dreadful sound are reënforced by the mention of the whirl and the echo. Were these omitted, the scene would lose much.

CXXVIII. Why is the moving of his lips worse to them than his silence ?



## CXXIX.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,  
 Who now doth crazy go, 565  
 Laughed loud and long, and all the while  
 His eyes went to and fro.  
 ' Ha ! ha ! ' quoth he, ' full plain I see,  
 The Devil knows how to row.'

## CXXX.

And now, all in my own countree, 570  
 I stood on the firm land !  
 The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,  
 And scarcely he could stand.

## CXXXI.

' O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man !'  
 The Hermit crossed his brow. 575  
 ' Say quick,' quoth he, ' I bid thee say—  
 What manner of man art thou ?'

The ancient  
 Mariner  
 earnestly en-  
 treateth the  
 Hermit to  
 shrieve him ;  
 and the pen-  
 ance of life  
 falls on him.

## CXXXII.

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched  
 With a woful agony,  
 Which forced me to begin my tale ; 580  
 And then it left me free.

CXXIX. *Doth go*. "Go crazy" is common. Here "go" is used a little more nearly in the sense of "be." If line two were omitted, line four would suggest his madness.

CXXXI. Note the Biblical effect of the last line. To what words is it due ?

## CXXXIII.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,  
That agony returns ;  
And till my ghastly tale is told,  
This heart within me burns.

585

## CXXXIV.

I pass, like night, from land to land ;  
I have strange power of speech ;  
That moment that his face I see,  
I know the man that must hear me :  
To him my tale I teach.

590

## CXXXV.

What loud uproar bursts from that door !  
The wedding-guests are there :  
But in the garden-bower the bride  
And bride-maids singing are ;  
And hark the little vesper bell,  
Which biddeth me to prayer !

595

CXXXIII. Some editions, for *an agony*, in the gloss, read *and agony*.

CXXXIV. What great traditional "wanderer" of romance does this suggest? *Teach*. Used in what sense? *That moment*. Some editions read *the*.

CXXXV. Observe the transition from the *uproar* to the *little vesper bell*. After this the whole tone of the poem changes. This stanza is what, in music, would be called a modulating passage, changing key and subject.

## CXXXVI.

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been  
 Alone on a wide, wide sea :  
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself  
 Scarce seemèd there to be.

600

## CXXXVII.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,  
 'Tis sweeter far to me,  
 To walk together to the kirk  
 With a goodly company !—

## CXXXVIII.

To walk together to the kirk,  
 And all together pray,  
 While each to his great Father bends,  
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,  
 And youths and maidens gay !

605

## CXXXIX.

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell  
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !  
 He prayeth well, who loveth well  
 Both man and bird and beast.

610

And to teach,  
 by his own  
 example,  
 love and  
 reverence to  
 all things that  
 God made and  
 loveth.

CXXXVI. and CXXXVII. Introduced by CXXXV. Why does he prefer the kirk ? What reason does the preceding stanza suggest ?

CXXXVIII. *Gay*. Happy, or brightly dressed. Does it modify *youths and maidens*, or only *maidens* ?

CXXXIX. and CXL. Note the repetition. Note also the progression from *well* to *best*. Observe how the verse lingers on *loveth*.

## CXL.

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
 All things both great and small ;      615  
 For the dear God who loveth us,  
 He made and loveth all."

## CXLI.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,  
 Whose beard with age is hoar,  
 Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest      620  
 Turned from the bridegroom's door.

## CXLII.

He went like one that hath been stunned,  
 And is of sense forlorn :  
 A sadder and a wiser man,  
 He rose the morrow morn.      625

CXL. *All things both great and small.* Is there a suggestion of *Psalms* civ., 25 ? Compare the last stanza of Wordsworth's *Hart-leap Well* :

"One lesson, shepherd, let us two divide,  
 Taught both by what she shows and what conceals,  
 Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
 With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

Read that poem. Compare its lesson with that of this poem. Which has the more positive, the more far-reaching moral ?

CXLI. Why did the Wedding-Guest turn away ?

CXLII. What does *sense* mean here ? What two meanings has the word ? *Forlorn*. Abandoned. Why was the Wedding-Guest "sadder and wiser" ?

# CHRISTABEL

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## INTRODUCTION

This poem was first published, with the following preface, in 1816:

“The first part of the following poem was written in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, at Stowey, in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany, in the year one thousand eight hundred, at Keswick, Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as, in my very first conception of the tale, I had the whole present in my mind, with the wholeness, no less than with the liveliness, of a vision, I trust that I shall be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come, in the course of the present year.

“It is probable, that if the poem had been finished at either of the former periods, or if even the first and second part had been published in the year 1800, the impression of its originality would have been much greater than I dare at present expect. But for this, I have only my own indolence to blame. The dates are mentioned for the exclusive purpose of precluding charges of plagiarism or servile imitation from myself. For there is amongst us a set of critics, who seem to hold that every possible thought and image is traditional; who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great; and who would therefore charitably derive every rill they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some

other man's tank. I am confident, however, that as far as the present poem is concerned, the celebrated poets whose writings I might be suspected of having imitated, either in particular passages, or in the tone and the spirit of the whole, would be among the first to vindicate me from the charge, and who, on any striking coincidence, would permit me to address them in this doggerel version of two monkish Latin hexameters:

'Tis mine, and it is likewise yours;  
 But an if this will not do,  
 Let it be mine, good friend, for I  
 Am the poorer of the two.

"I have only to add that the metre of the *Christabel* is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle,—namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition, in the nature of the imagery or passion."

Christabel is not merely a story in verse. Regarded as a story, it is perhaps disappointing. It cannot be compared with "The Lady of the Lake," or with "Horatius at the Bridge." It is first of all a poem. It appeals to us, like the "Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan," through its mingling of imagination and melody. It has besides, what is called "atmosphere,"—which means that it takes us into an enchanted world where all that happens seems to be carried on in a magic light, to the spell of pervading music. It has the tone of dreamy beauty that one finds in Lohengrin or in Parsifal. One finds one's self wondering that no Wagner has ever made use of it.

Some pupils reading it for the first time, are bewildered, and ask: "What is the idea? What is it all about? What has the snake to do with it?" One must be sure to get the answer clear at the outset. The subject of the poem is the danger that threatens the heroine Christabel from a serpent-woman called Geraldine. There are many old beliefs in such beings, evil spirits masking in human form. Their rightful form is an animal form, and if compelled by holy charms they can be made to reveal themselves in their true shape,—as serpents, or wolves, or, in Japanese stories, foxes.

Geraldine is a serpent, a Lamia, assuming human form to deceive her intended victim. (There is a wonderful tale of such a being in Keats's poem *Lamia*.) By pretending helplessness, she induces Christabel to offer her shelter in her own home, and even to let her sleep by her side. There is about her appearance (disclosed only when she disrobes) some horror beyond words,—some sign of her real nature that Coleridge leaves to be imagined, "a sight to dream of, not to tell." Her touch and presence gives her a power over Christabel, who cannot tell what she has seen or resist the serpent fascination of this terrible being. The stranger's eyes seem to hold her victim as a snake's eyes hold the bird that it is to devour. It is in vain for her to appeal to her father, for he is so enchanted with Geraldine's beauty and apparent innocence that he can believe nothing against her. Christabel's only hope lies in her mother.

Her mother is no longer living, but her spirit, as a guardian angel, watches over her daughter. About Christabel as she sleeps, one feels the two influences, Geraldine's and the mother's, the evil and the good, contending as the good and evil battle in *Tannhäuser*. The poem centres about this contest, and by keeping it clearly in mind, one will find the story easy to understand.

Coleridge had planned out the whole poem. He never, however, carried his plan out. As he told it to a friend, it was as follows:

Knowing that Bracy will find out and reveal that her whole story is made up of lies, Geraldine disappears before he returns. (He reports that the castle of Tryermaine is a deserted ruin.) But she goes only to return almost immediately in a new form—spirits “can either sex assume”—in the disguise of Christabel’s own betrothed knight, the one for whose safety she prayed in the forest.

Christabel feels a strange shrinking from him, yet she keeps her word and prepares for the marriage. But at the altar, just as she is about to become the bride and victim of this “demon lover,” her real lover appears to save her. He is identified by a ring that she once gave him; the evil spirit vanishes; the castle bell strikes twelve; the mother’s voice is heard in blessing; the true lovers are wedded; and all is well.

Opinions about this conclusion differ. Some feel that had he been able to apply himself to the task, Coleridge could have carried this plan out worthily. Walter Pater speaks of it as “an exquisitely limited design.” Yet others think that not a little of the poem’s appeal to us lies in the fact that it is not and cannot be finished. No one finishes a dream. And there is great suggestion in an inspired fragment. If we saw the *Venus de Milo* or the *Winged Victory* complete,—we might be disappointed. The imperfect hint suggests more than genius could carry out.

In reading the poem, one must, as in the other poems, take great pains to bring out the cadence and rhythm of the lines. In studying the meter, there should be no formal division into feet, only recognition of the four accents, (See Coleridge’s own introductory note on page 52.)

The ideal way to read the poem is to read it as a “wonder-



tale," a tale set to beautiful music and enriched with marvellous word pictures and enchanting imagery. Much should be memorized. Any one able to enjoy true poetry will remember much without effort.

The poem deals with a different part of England from that in which Coleridge wrote the "Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan." In writing the first part, Coleridge had not intended this, but when he began the second part, he had changed his home to the so-called Lake Region, (see Introduction, page xv) and the Castle of Sir Leoline is now placed in Cumberland, near Langdale Pikes, mountains between Windermere and Keswick. It is a country of abrupt mountains, rapid streams, and narrow valleys with beautiful lakes. Bracy's journey would carry him to the Scotch border, well to the east of Carlisle. These facts are not important in themselves, but it is interesting to see how thoroughly Coleridge's interests had been transferred to his new surroundings, surroundings that he and Wordsworth were to make famous.

Students of literary history may trace the growth of the "Gothic" type of story, the kind dealing with castles, spirits and mystery. Probably Coleridge was greatly influenced by the German writers of his own day, Schiller and Goethe among them. Other "romantic" works that appeared about the same time, some a little later, were Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel," Beckford's "Vathek," Mrs. Radcliffe's "Mysteries of Udolpho," Walpole's "Castle of Otranto," and Monk Lewis's "Tales of Wonder and Terror." Later, in America, Poe and Charles Brockden Brown carried out the same tendency. All these are interesting reading—for those who like stories full of "shudder" and mystery.

Some question the poem as a picture of life and character. It is not a realistic depiction. It is an emotional ideal picture, such as we find in opera. Still, all the elements

that it depicts are in the real world about us—gentle, confiding Christabels; evil Geraldines, designing and serpentlike; and mothers whose influence and teaching may help even from beyond the grave. And the wonderful world of nature—hill and forest and sky, moonlight and sunlight—is about us all, always. In the biggest, deepest sense, the poem is true.

# CHRISTABEL

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## PART THE FIRST

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,  
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock,  
Tu—whit!——Tu—whoo!  
And hark, again! the crowing cock  
How drowsily it crew. 5

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,  
Hath a toothless mastiff, which  
From her kennel beneath the rock  
Maketh answer to the clock,  
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour; 10  
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,  
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;  
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?  
The night is chilly, but not dark. 15

1. Observe how all the detail accumulates to give a sense of uneasiness and expectation:—midnight, clouded moonlight, early spring, the hooting of the owl, the howling of the dog, the ancient castle, the disturbing dreams.

3. Here we have the four accents only, the bare skeletons of the meter, one beat to each bar. (See author's note, on page 52).

13. *My lady's*, the former lady of the castle, Christabel's mother,—the protecting influence through the story.

14. As in the "Ancient Mariner," all happens with a dream-like abruptness. Observe Coleridge's use of question and answer, with repetition of the same words,—to arouse nervous expectation. (A modern dramatist, Maeterlinck, makes much use of this device.)

The thin gray cloud is spread on high,  
 It covers but not hides the sky.  
 The moon is behind, and at the full;  
 And yet she looks both small and dull.  
 The night is chill, the cloud is gray: 20  
 'Tis the month before the month of May,  
 And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,  
 Whom her father loves so well,  
 What makes her in the wood so late, 25  
 A furlong from the castle gate?  
 She had dreams all yesternight  
 Of her own betrothed knight;  
 And she in the midnight wood will pray  
 For the weal of her lover that's far away. 30

She stole along, she nothing spoke,  
 The sighs she heaved were soft and low,  
 And naught was green upon the oak  
 But moss and rarest mistletoe:  
 She kneels beneath the huge oak tree, 35  
 And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,  
 The lovely lady, Christabel!  
 It moaned as near, as near can be,  
 But what is it she cannot tell. 40  
 On the other side it seems to be,  
 Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

22. *Up this way.* In England. (When Coleridge wrote Part the First he may not have meant the North Country.)

30. *Weal.* Welfare, safety.

The night is chill; the forest bare;  
 Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?  
 There is not wind enough in the air 45  
 To move away the ringlet curl  
 From the lovely lady's cheek—  
 There is not wind enough to twirl  
 The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
 That dances as often as dance it can, 50  
 Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
 On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.  
 Hush, beating heart of Christabel!  
 Jesu, Maria, shield her well!  
 She folded her arms beneath her cloak, 55  
 And stole to the other side of the oak.  
 What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,  
 Drest in a silken robe of white,  
 That shadowy in the moonlight shone: 60  
 The neck that made that white robe wan,  
 Her stately neck, and arms were bare;  
 Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were,  
 And wildly glittered here and there  
 The gems entangled in her hair. 65  
 I guess, 'twas frightful there to see  
 A lady so richly clad as she—  
 Beautiful exceedingly!

'Mary mother, save me now!  
 (Said Christabel,) 'And who art thou?' 70

58. There is little in the lady to indicate her evil nature. Yet note her sudden appearance in this lonely spot, and her unnatural, almost unearthly beauty.

The lady strange made answer meet,  
 And her voice was faint and sweet:—  
 ‘Have pity on my sore distress,  
 I scarce can speak for weariness:  
 Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!’ 75  
 Said Christabel, ‘How camest thou here?’  
 And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,  
 Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

‘My sire is of a noble line,  
 And my name is Geraldine: 80  
 Five warriors seized me yesternorn,  
 Me, even me, a maid forlorn:  
 They choked my cries with force and fright,  
 And tied me on a palfrey white,  
 The palfrey was as fleet as wind, 85  
 And they rode furiously behind.  
 They spurred amain, their steeds were white:  
 And once we crossed the shade of night.  
 As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,  
 I have no thought what men they be; 90  
 Nor do I know how long it is  
 (For I have lain entranced I wis)  
 Since one, the tallest of the five,  
 Took me from the palfrey’s back,  
 A weary woman, scarce alive. 95  
 Some muttered words his comrades spoke:  
 He placed me underneath this oak;  
 He swore they would return with haste;  
 Whither they went I cannot tell—  
 I thought I heard, some minutes past, 100

78. *Meet.* Fitting.

79. The lady’s story is of course entirely untrue. She tells it to deceive Christabel into giving her shelter.

Sounds of a castle bell.  
 Stretch forth thy hand' (thus ended she),  
 'And help a wretched maid to flee.'

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,  
 And comforted fair Geraldine: 105  
 'O well, bright dame! may you command  
 The service of Sir Leoline;  
 And gladly our stout chivalry  
 Will he send forth and friends withal  
 To guide and guard you safe and free 110  
 Home to your noble father's hall.'

She rose: and forth with steps they passed  
 That strove to be, and were not, fast.  
 Her gracious stars the lady blest,  
 And thus spake on sweet Christabel: 115  
 'All our household are at rest,  
 The hall as silent as the cell;  
 Sir Leoline is weak in health,  
 And may not well awakened be,  
 But we will move as if in stealth, 120  
 And I beseech your courtesy,  
 This night, to share your couch with me.'

They crossed the moat, and Christabel  
 Took the key that fitted well;  
 A little door she opened straight, 125  
 And in the middle of the gate;  
 The gate that was ironed within and without,  
 Where an army in battle array had marched out.

18. *Chivalry* Knights.

114. *Stars*. "Bless my stars" is now trivial. Once, when people believed in astrology, it expressed sincere thankfulness that one's stars had brought one good fortune.

The lady sank, belike through pain,  
 And Christabel with might and main 130  
 Lifted her up, a weary weight,  
 Over the threshold of the gate:  
 Then the lady rose again,  
 And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear, 135  
 They crossed the court: right glad they were.  
 And Christabel devoutly cried  
 To the lady by her side,  
 'Praise we the Virgin all divine  
 Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!' 140  
 'Alas, alas!' said Geraldine,  
 'I cannot speak for weariness.'  
 So free from danger, free from fear,  
 They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old 145  
 Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.  
 The mastiff old did not awake,  
 Yet she an angry moan did make!  
 And what can ail the mastiff bitch?  
 Never till now she uttered yell 150  
 Beneath the eye of Christabel.  
 Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:  
 For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

129-134. There was an old belief that no evil spirit had power to cross an innocent person's threshold unless that person carried it in. We get, then, a hint as to the lady's nature.

142. Why cannot Geraldine join Christabel in prayer to the Virgin? What does her refusal show?

149. *What can ail.* Animals are supposed to recognize the presence of spirits more quickly than their master. (Recall the story of Balaam.)



They passed the hall, that echoes still,  
Pass as lightly as you will! 155

The brands were flat, the brands were dying,  
Amid their own white ashes lying;  
But when the lady passed, there came  
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;  
And Christabel saw the lady's eye, 160

And nothing else saw she thereby,  
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,  
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.  
'O softly tread,' said Christabel,  
'My father seldom sleepeth well.' 165

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,  
And jealous of the listening air  
They steal their way from stair to stair,  
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,  
And now they pass the Baron's room, 170  
As still as death, with stifled breath!  
And now have reached her chamber door;  
And now doth Geraldine press down  
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air, 175  
And not a moon beam enters here.  
But they without its light can see  
The chamber carved so curiously,  
Carved with figures strange and sweet,  
All made out of the carver's brain, 180

158. *But when the lady.* Another sign of an evil spirit passing.

162. *Boss.* A rounded metal knob (in the center of a shield).

167. *Jealous.* Suspiciously watchful.

169. A beautiful line.

174. *Rushes.* The usual covering for floors in ancient castles.

175. Compare for the effect of stealth and dim light, Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes."

For a lady's chamber meet:  
The lamp with twofold silver chain  
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;  
But Christabel the lamp will trim. 185

She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,  
And left it swinging two and fro,  
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,  
Sank down upon the floor below.

'O weary lady, Geraldine, 190  
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!  
It is a wine of virtuous powers;  
My mother made it of wild flowers.'

'And will your mother pity me,  
Who am a maiden most forlorn?' 195

Christabel answered—'Woe is me!  
She died the hour that I was born.  
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell  
How on her death bed she did say,  
That she should hear the castle-bell 200  
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.

O mother dear! that thou wert here!  
'I would,' said Geraldine, 'she were!'

But soon with altered voice, said she—  
'Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine! 205

187. See how the word "swinging" makes the picture real.

188. Does the figure of the angel have anything to do with the lady's weakness?

200. See the plan of the whole story, page 54. This prophecy was to have been carried out.

204. Here Geraldine reveals for a moment her true spirit. Why does Christabel fail to understand? To what does she attribute the lady's strange words?

I have power to bid thee flee.'  
 Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?  
 Why stares she with unsettled eye?  
 Can she the bodiless dead espy?  
 And why with hollow voice cries she, 210  
 'Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—  
 Though thou her guardian spirit be,  
 Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me.'

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,  
 And raised to heaven her eyes so blue— 215  
 'Alas!' said she, 'this ghastly ride—  
 Dear lady! it hath wildered you!  
 The lady wiped her moist cold brow,  
 And faintly said, 'Tis over now!'

Again the wild-flower wine she drank: 220  
 Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,  
 And from the floor whereon she sank,  
 The lofty lady stood upright:  
 She was most beautiful to see,  
 Like a lady of a far countrée. 225

And thus the lofty lady spake—  
 'All they who live in the upper sky,  
 Do love you, holy Christabel!  
 And you love them, and for their sake  
 And for the good which me befel, 230  
 Even I in my degree will try,  
 Fair maiden, to requite you well.  
 But now unrobe yourself; for I

221. Observe how the attention is always drawn to Geraldine's eyes.

Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie?  
 Quoth Christabel, 'So let it be!' 235  
 And as the lady bade, did she.  
 Her gentle limbs did she undress,  
 And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe  
 So many thoughts moved to and fro, 240  
 That vain it were her lids to close;  
 So half-way from the bed she rose.

And on her elbow did recline  
 To look at the lady Geraldine.  
 Beneath the lamp the lady bowed, 245

And slowly rolled her eyes around;

Then drawing in her breath aloud,  
 Like one that shuddered, she unbound  
 The cincture from beneath her breast:

Her silken robe, and inner vest, 250

Dropt to her feet, and full in view,

Behold! her bosom and half her side—

A sight to dream of, not to tell!

O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs: 255

Ah! what a stricken look was hers!

Deep from within she seems half-way

To lift some weight with sick assay,

And eyes the maid and seeks delay;

Then suddenly, as one defied, 260

239. *Of weal and woe* modifies *thoughts*.

249. *Cincture*. Girdle, belt.

253. *A sight*. What did Christabel see? What was the visible sign of Geraldine's serpent spirit? Why does not Coleridge tell us? Would it be better if he did?

258. *Assay*. Effort, endeavor.

Collects herself in scorn and pride,  
 And lay down by the Maiden's side!—  
 And in her arms the maid she took,  
     Ah wel-a-day!  
 And with low voice and doleful look 265  
 These words did say:  
 'In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,  
 Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!  
 Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,  
 This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow; 270  
     But vainly thou warrest,  
     For this is alone in  
     Thy power to declare,  
     That in the dim forest  
     Thou heard'st a low moaning, 275  
 And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;  
 And didst bring her home with thee in love and in  
     charity,  
 To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.'

267. The effect of the touch of Geraldine's bosom seems to be this:—Christabel, while feeling the evil power and struggling against it, is to be unable to tell what she has seen. She can speak only of the bare facts given in lines 274–279. Geraldine has the hypnotic power that a snake exercises over its victim. The bird trembles and cries out in terror, yet cannot tear itself away.

271–275. To be read as if each pair was equal to a long line,—or as if each short line had four accents? (See Coleridge's introduction. Compare line 3.)

## THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE FIRST

It was a lovely sight to see  
 The lady Christabel, when she 280  
 Was praying at the old oak tree.  
     Amid the jagged shadows  
     Of mossy leafless boughs,  
     Kneeling in the moonlight,  
     To make her gentle vows; 285  
 Her slender palms together prest,  
 Heaving sometimes on her breast;  
 Her face resigned to bliss or bale—  
 Her face, oh call it fair, not pale,  
 And both blue eyes more bright than clear, 290  
 Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)  
 Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,  
 Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,  
 Dreaming that alone, which is— 295  
 O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,  
 The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?  
 And lo! the worker of these harms,  
 That holds the maiden in her arms,  
 Seems to slumber still and mild, 300  
 As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,  
 O Geraldine! since arms of thine  
 Have been the lovely lady's prison.  
 O Geraldine! one hour was thine— 305  
 Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,

294. *Wis.* Think.306. *Tairn.* Tarn, small mountain pool.

The night birds all that hour were still.  
 But now they are jubilant anew,  
 From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!  
 Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell! 310

And see! the lady Christabel  
 Gathers herself from out her trance;  
 Her limbs relax, her countenance  
 Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids,  
 Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds— 315  
 Large tears that leave the lashes bright!  
 And oft the while she seems to smile  
 As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,  
 Like a youthful hermitess, 320  
 Beauteous in the wilderness,  
 Who, praying always, prays in sleep.  
 And, if she move unquietly,  
 Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free  
 Comes back and tingles in her feet. 325  
 No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.  
 What if her guardian spirit 'twere,  
 What if she knew her mother near?  
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,  
 That saints will aid if men will call: 330  
 For the blue sky bends over all!

#### CONCLUSION TO PART FIRST.

The poet meditates upon the part of the story just told, and carries the action a little further through the night. By the touch of her bosom Geraldine has accomplished her purpose. (305.) But there remains hope. Christabel finds comfort in a dream. Her mother is watching over her. The saints will aid. Heaven will protect innocence.

## PART THE SECOND

'Each matin bell,' the Baron saith,  
'Knells us back to a world of death.'  
These words Sir Leoline first said,  
When he rose and found his lady dead: 335  
These words Sir Leoline will say  
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began  
That still at dawn the sacristan,  
Who duly pulls the heavy bell, 340  
Five and forty beads must tell  
Between each stroke—a warning knell,  
Which not a soul can choose but hear  
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, 'So let it knell! 345  
And let the drowsy sacristan  
Still count as slowly as he can!  
There is no lack of such, I ween,  
As well fill up the space between.  
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair, 350  
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,  
With ropes of rock and bells of air

335. Christabel's mother is kept before us.

339. *Sacristan*. The original form of *sexton*.

344. *Bratha Head, Wyndermere*. Brathay and Windermere, some miles to the southeast of the site of the story.

350. *Langdale Pike*, a craggy mountain. Sir Leoline's castle seems to have been near it.

351. *Dungeon Ghyll* (or Gill), a deep ravine, with a waterfall near Langdale Pike. It looks as if rent apart.



Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,  
 Who all give back, one after t'other,  
 The death-note to their living brother; 355  
 And oft too, by the knell offended,  
 Just as their one! two! three! is ended,  
 The devil mocks the doeful tale  
 With a merry peal from Borrowdale.'

The air is still! through mist and cloud 360  
 That merry peal comes ringing loud;  
 And Geraldine shakes off her dread,  
 And rises lightly from her bed;  
 Puts on her silken vestments white,  
 And tricks her hair in lovely plight, 365  
 And nothing doubting of her spell  
 Awakens the lady Christabel.  
 'Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?  
 I trust that you have rested well.'

And Christabel awoke and spied 370  
 The same who lay down by her side—  
 O rather say, the same whom she  
 Raised up beneath the old oak tree!  
 Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!  
 For she belike hath drunken deep 375  
 Of all the blessedness of sleep!

353. *Three sinful sextons'*. Evidently a local legend connected with the wild, desolate, scene.

354. The idea seems to be that there were bells enough to fill up the long intervals between the sacristan's peals, for the three condemned sextons were ringing their infernal chime and the bells from Borrowdale (six miles or so to the northwest) could be heard besides.

365. *Tricks*. Arranges. *Plight*. Condition (or is it here equal to plait?).

375-6. Lines of unusual beauty.

And while she spake, her looks, her air,  
 Such gentle thankfulness declare,  
 That (so it seemed) her girded vests  
 Grew t'ight beneath her heaving breasts. 380  
 'Sure I have sinn'd!' said Christabel,  
 'Now heaven be praised if all be well!  
 And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,  
 Did she the lofty lady greet  
 With such perplexity of mind 385  
 As dreams too lively leave behind.  
 So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed  
 Her maiden limbs, and having prayed  
 That He, who on the cross did groan,  
 Might wash away her sins unknown, 390  
 She forthwith led fair Geraldine  
 To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and lady tall  
 Are pacing both into the hall,  
 And pacing on through page and groom, 395  
 Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest  
 His gentle daughter to his breast,  
 With cheerful wonder in his eyes  
 The lady Geraldine espies, 400  
 And gave such welcome to the same  
 As might beseem so bright a dame!

¶ 381. Christabel doubts what she herself has seen. She feels that she must have dreamed it and that she must have wronged the lady.

396. The Baron is fascinated from the first by Geraldine's beauty. He can believe no evil of her and will side with her against his own daughter.

But when he heard the lady's tale,  
 And when she told her father's name,  
 Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale, 405  
 Murmuring o'er the name again,  
 Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;  
 But whispering tongues can poison truth;  
 And constancy lives in realms above; 410  
 And life is thorny; and youth is vain;  
 And to be wroth with one we love  
 Doth work like madness in the brain.  
 And thus it chanced, as I divine,  
 With Roland and Sir Leoline. 415  
 Each spake words of high disdain  
 And insult to his heart's best brother:  
 They parted—ne'er to meet again!  
 But never either found another  
 To free the hollow heart from paining— 420  
 They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
 Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;  
 A dreary sea now flows between;  
 But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
 Shall wholly do away, I ween, 425  
 The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,  
 Stood gazing on the damsel's face:  
 And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine  
 Came back upon his heart again. 430

408. A passage that may have been written independently and inserted in this poem. A wonderful picture of parted friendship.

O then the Baron forgot his age,  
 His noble heart swelled high with rage;  
 He swore by the wounds of Jesu's side  
 He would proclaim it far and wide,  
 With trump and solemn heraldry, 435  
 That they, who thus had wronged the dame,  
 Were base as spotted infamy!  
 'And if they dare deny the same,  
 My herald shall appoint a week,  
 And let the recreant traitors seek 440  
 My tourney court—that there and then  
 I may dislodge their reptile souls  
 From the bodies and forms of men?  
 He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!  
 For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned 445  
 In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,  
 And fondly in his arms he took  
 Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,  
 Prolonging it with joyous look. 450  
 Which when she viewed, a vision fell  
 Upon the soul of Christabel,  
 The vision of fear, the touch and pain!  
 She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—  
 (Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee, 455  
 Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

431-443. Note the ringing defiance, in proper medieval form.

445. *Kenned*. Recognized.

450. She wishes to increase her hold over him and so leave Christabel defenceless. The sight of his infatuation made Christabel realize her own peril and loneliness. The serpent influence comes over her so strongly that she answers with "a hissing sound."

Again she saw that bosom old,  
 Again she felt that bosom cold,  
 And drew in her breath with a hissing sound :  
 Whereat the Knight turned wildly round, 460  
 And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid  
 With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.  
 The touch, the sight, had passed away,  
 And in its stead that vision blest,  
 Which comforted her after-rest, 465  
 While in the lady's arms she lay,  
 Had put a rapture in her breast,  
 And on her lips and o'er her eyes  
 Spread smiles like light! With new surprise,  
 'What ails then my beloved child?' 470  
 The Baron said.—His daughter mild  
 Made answer, 'All will yet be well!  
 I ween, she had no power to tell  
 Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine, 475  
 Had deemed her sure a thing divine.  
 Such sorrow with such grace she blended,  
 As if she feared she had offended  
 Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!  
 And with such lowly tones she prayed 480  
 She might be sent without delay  
 Home to her father's mansion.

463. The protecting influence again asserts itself, the vision of her mother's aid.

474. *The spell.* The spell that kept her from telling what she had seen.

475. Geraldine, of course, pretends angelic meekness and submission.

‘Nay!

Nay, by my soul!’ said Leoline.

‘Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!

Go thou, with music sweet and loud, 485

And take two steeds with trappings proud,

And take the youth whom thou lov’st best

To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,

And clothe you both in solemn vest,

And over the mountains haste along, 490

Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,

Detain you on the valley road.

‘And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,

My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes

Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood, 495

And reaches soon that castle good

Which stands and threatens Scotland’s wastes.

‘Bard Bracy! Bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,

Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,

More loud than your horses’ echoing feet! 500

And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,

Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!

Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—

Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.

He bids thee come without delay 505

With all thy numerous array;

And take thy lovely daughter home.

And he will meet thee on the way

484. *Bard*. A bard was a minstrel. He might, as here, be used as a herald.

489. *Vest*. Vestment, garments.

493. *Irthing, Knorren Moor, Halegarth*. Places near the Scottish border.

With all his numerous array  
 White with their panting palfreys' foam: 510  
 And, by mine honour! I will say,  
 That I repent me of the day  
 When I spake words of fierce disdain  
 To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!—  
 For since that evil hour hath flown, 515  
 Many a summer's sun hath shone;  
 Yet ne'er found I a friend again  
 Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine.'

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,  
 Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing; 520  
 And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,  
 His gracious hail on all bestowing;  
 'Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,  
 Are sweeter than my harp can tell ;  
 Yet might I gain a boon of thee, 525  
 This day my journey should not be,  
 So strange a dream hath come to me;  
 That I had vowed with music loud  
 To clear your wood from thing unblest,  
 Warn'd by a vision in my rest! 530  
 For in my sleep I saw that dove,  
 That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,  
 And call'st by thy own daughter's name—  
 Sir Leoline! I saw the same,  
 Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan, 535  
 Among the green herbs in the forest alone  
 Which when I saw and when I heard,  
 I wonder'd what might ail the bird;

527. *So strange a dream.* His vision has shown him the truth, but he cannot interpret it.

For nothing near it could I see,  
 Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old  
                   tree. 540

‘And in my dream, methought, I went  
 To search out what might there be found;  
 And what the sweet bird’s trouble meant,  
 That thus lay fluttering on the ground.  
 I went and peered, and could descry 545  
 No cause for her distressful cry;  
 But yet for her dear lady’s sake  
 I stooped, methought, the dove to take,  
 When lo! I saw a bright green snake  
 Coiled around its wing and neck. 550  
 Green as the herbs on which it couched,  
 Close by the dove’s its head it crouched;  
 And with the dove it heaves and stirs,  
 Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!  
 I woke; it was the midnight hour, 555  
 The clock was echoing in the tower;  
 But though my slumber was gone by,  
 This dream it would not pass away—  
 It seems to live upon my eye!  
 And thence I vowed this self-same day 560  
 With music strong and saintly song  
 To wander through the forest bare,  
 Lest aught unholy loiter there.’

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,  
 Half-listening heard him with a smile; 565  
 Then turned to Lady Geraldine,  
 His eyes made up of wonder and love,

567. The baron is completely infatuated. He has eyes only for her.



And said in courtly accents fine,  
 'Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,  
 With arms more strong than harp or song, 570  
 Thy sire and I will crush the snake!  
 He kissed her forehead as he spake,  
 And Geraldine in maiden wise  
 Casting down her large bright eyes,  
 With blushing cheek and courtesy fine 575  
 She turned her from Sir Leoline;  
 Softly gathering up her train,  
 That o'er her right arm fell again;  
 And folded her arms across her chest,  
 And couched her head upon her breast, 580  
 And looked askance at Christabel—  
 Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,  
 And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,  
 Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye, 585  
 And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,  
 At Christabel she look'd askance!—  
 One moment—and the sight was fled!  
 But Christabel in dizzy trance  
 Stumbling on the unsteady ground 590  
 Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;  
 And Geraldine again turned round,  
 And like a thing that sought relief,

574-5. More affected modesty,—for Sir Leoline's eyes.

576. Observe carefully the detail of the serpent position:—the train looped up in a curve, the arms folded out of sight, the head "couched" sideways, the look askance, out of the small "shrunken" eyes. No wonder that Christabel utters a "hissing sound." The picture is so vivid that the idea of the snake fills her whole being.

593-6. Compare 574.

Full of wonder and full of grief,  
 She rolled her large bright eyes divine 595  
 Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,  
 She nothing sees—no sight but one!  
 The maid, devoid of guile and sin,  
 I know not how, in fearful wise, 600

So deeply had she drunken in  
 That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,  
 That all her features were resigned  
 To this sole image in her mind:  
 And passively did imitate 605

That look of dull and treacherous hate!  
 And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,  
 Still picturing that look askance  
 With forced unconscious sympathy  
 Full before her father's view—— 610

As far as such a look could be  
 In eyes so innocent and blue!  
 And when the trance was o'er, the maid  
 Paused awhile, and inly prayed:  
 Then falling at the Baron's feet, 615

'By my mother's soul do I entreat  
 That thou this woman send away!  
 She said: and more she could not say:  
 For what she knew she could not tell,  
 O'ermastered by the mighty spell. 620

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,  
 Sir Leoline? Thy only child

605. Christabel feels the look of hate so keenly that, being under the spell, she cannot help imitating it. Note, however, lines 611 and 612.

Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,  
 So fair, so innocent, so mild;  
 The same, for whom thy lady died! 625  
 O, by the pangs of her dear mother  
 Think thou no evil of thy child!  
 For her, and thee, and for no other,  
 She prayed the moment ere she died,  
 Prayed that the babe for whom she died, 630  
 Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!  
 That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,  
     Sir Leoline!  
 And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,  
     Her child and thine? 635

Within the Baron's heart and brain  
 If thoughts, like these, had any share,  
 They only swelled his rage and pain,  
 And did but work confusion there.  
 His heart was cleft with pain and rage, 640  
 His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,  
 Dishonour'd thus in his old age;  
 Dishonour'd by his only child,  
 And all his hospitality  
 To the insulted daughter of his friend 645  
 By more than woman's jealousy  
 Brought thus to a disgraceful end—  
 He rolled his eye with stern regard  
 Upon his gentle minstrel bard,  
 And said in tones abrupt, austere— 650  
 'Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?  
 I bade thee hence!' The bard obeyed,  
 And turning from his own sweet maid,

The aged knight, Sir Leoline,  
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

655

655. Up to this point in the story. Geraldine triumphs. For the complete plan, never carried out, see page 54. This part ends with Christabel apparently at Geraldine's mercy, her father infatuated with the spells and beauty of her enemy. Her only hope lies in the guardianship of her mother's spirit. That hope, as Coleridge planned the story, was not to fail her.

## THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE SECOND

A little child, a limber elf,  
 Singing, dancing to itself,  
 A fairy thing with red round cheeks,  
 That always finds, and never seeks,  
 Makes such a vision to the sight, 660  
 As fills a father's eyes with light;  
 And pleasures flow in so thick and fast  
 Upon his heart, that he at last  
 Must needs express his love's excess  
 With words of unmeant bitterness. 665  
 Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together  
 Thoughts so all unlike each other;  
 To mutter and mock a broken charm,  
 To dally with wrong that does no harm.  
 Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty 670  
 At each wild word to feel within  
 A sweet recoil of love and pity.  
 And what, if in a world of sin  
 (O sorrow and shame should this be true!)  
 Such giddiness of heart and brain 675  
 Comes seldom save from rage and pain,  
 So talks as it's most used to do.

## CONCLUSION TO PART THE SECOND.

This is a conclusion to Part Second only in so far as it comes after it. It is of love instead of hate and of fatherly tenderness instead of a father's neglect. Coleridge probably had it at hand and inserted it here feeling that a passage of this kind made a pleasant contrasted relief.

It aims to explain, rather philosophically, why a father, loving and petting his child, calls it such names as "rascal", "rogue" and other tenderly abusive words. His last reason is that when we have emotions in this world, they are generally of rage, and therefore words used to express these come most readily to mind when we have feelings to express. Is this convincing,—or is it simply gracefully ingenious?



# KUBLA KHAN

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## INTRODUCTION

This poem was published in 1816, in the same volume with "The Pains of Sleep." It was introduced by the following note:

"The following fragment is here published at the request of a poet of great and deserved celebrity, and as far as the author's own opinions are concerned, rather as a psychological curiosity than on the ground of any supposed *poetic merits*.

"In the summer of the year 1797, the author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in *Purchas's Pilgrimage*: 'Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground was inclosed with a wall.' The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose

up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general import of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but alas! without the after restoration of the latter. . . .”

Coleridge's recollection of the passage that inspired the poem is not quite accurate. The actual words come nearer to the wording of the poem itself:—

“In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately Palace, encompassing sixteene miles of plaine ground with a wall, wherein are fertile Meddowes, pleasant Springs, delightful Streames, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the midst thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure.”

This idea the poet has developed as a musician develops a theme. He has added elaborate detail and, still more important, he has added a wealth of feeling. He has been able to make us feel all that this passage meant to him as he read it.

Possibly the spot where the poem was composed had a little to do with the scenery depicted. The country of “Lorna Doone” (that book was not then written) has a grandeur about its heathery hills and seaward headlands, and a richness in its wooded combs or hollows



that may have prepared the writer's mind to create this far grander and wilder picture.

No study of the places named in the poem is desirable. Coleridge used the names for their sound and their suggestion. An ignorant old woman once said that in church she had been helped by the "blessed word Mesopotamia." To feel the Oriental magic of these names we must approach them with an ignorance like hers.

This poem must be read aloud. While it must not be read in a sing-song way, it must be read with emphasis upon the rhythm,—it might indeed, be almost intoned or chanted, especially in such passages as

"Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man,  
Down to the sunless sea."

The meter is of a free type, changing to fit the thought and mood, like the changing rhythms of a sonata or symphony. The reader must be guided by artistic instinct rather than by any set rule.

If possible, the entire poem should be memorized.

## KUBLA KHAN

IN Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea. 5  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled around:  
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
And here were forests ancient as the hills, 10  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!  
A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted 15  
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!  
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,  
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,  
A mighty fountain momently was forced:

1. *Khan* is a title, "Kubla (the) Khan" or ruler.

2. *Pleasure dome*. A dome of oriental architecture (like the Taj Mahal, for instance), airy and intricate,—a glorified "summer-house."

8. *Here*. Some editions read *there*. Which is better?

16. *Demon lover*. There are many old tales of mortals falling in love with superhuman beings, sometimes evil.

19. *Fountain*. In the sense of waters gushing out from the earth,—a huge spring.

Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst 20  
 Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,  
 Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:  
 And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
 It flung up momentarily the sacred river.  
 Five miles meandering with a mazy motion 25  
 Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,  
 Then reached the caverns measureless to man,  
 And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:  
 And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far  
 Ancestral voices prophesying war! 30

The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
 Floated midway on the waves;  
 Where was heard the mingled measure  
 From the fountain and the caves.  
 It was a miracle of rare device, 35  
 A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer  
 In a vision once I saw:  
 It was an Abyssinian maid,  
 And on her dulcimer she played, 40  
 Singing of Mount Abora.  
 Could I revive within me  
 Her symphony and song,  
 To such a deep delight 'twould win me,

31-36. The pleasure dome stood just above the caverns where the river sank to a sunless sea.

37. *Damsel*. A change of plan as well as form. He means that could he recall the inspiration of her song, he might be able to depict the wonders of that dome.

*Dulcimer*. An instrument somewhat like the zither.

43. *Symphony*. Her playing upon the dulcimer.

That with music loud and long, 45  
 I would build that dome in air,  
 That sunny dome! those caves of ice!  
 And all who heard should see them there,  
 And all should cry, 'Beware! Beware!  
 His flashing eyes, his floating hair! 50  
 Weave a circle around him thrice,  
 And close your eyes with holy dread,  
 For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
 And drunk the milk of Paradise.'

49. *And all should cry.* All who should see and hear the poet so entranced.

53. *Honey-dew.* See note on *Ancient Mariner*, page 34.

There is no hint of the intended conclusion. One doubts whether, even if the person from Porlock had not broken in, the poem could ever have been completed. Dreams do not finish—they break off!

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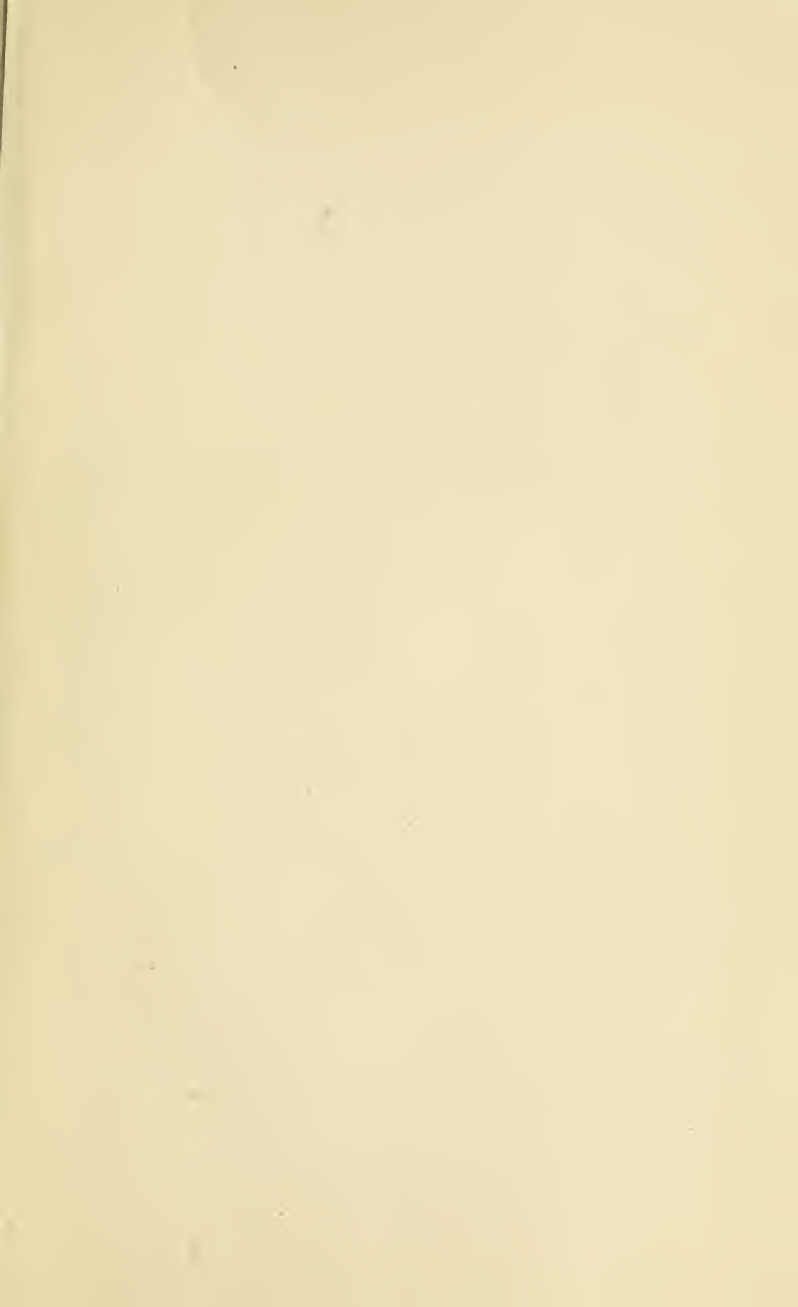
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